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ABSTRACT

Providing training for teachers and educators in home-school-community involvement is important for an obvious reason: schools don't operate in a vacuum. To be successful in the primary mission of educating the community's children, educators need to know a great deal about the community and the families from which the children come. The focus of this manual is the crucial role the classroom teacher plays in parent and community involvement efforts. It may be used as a reference, as the basis for a course, or in individual units for topical presentations. After an introductory unit on the social environment and forces that are necessitating educational reform, the text covers: (1) demographics and trends influencing public education; (2) changing attitudes; (3) what the research is saying; (4) a framework for parent involvement; (5) principles for successful programs and strategies for reducing home-school barriers; (6) implementation strategies; (7) building bridges between home and school; and (8) school volunteer programs. Information on the Family Involvement Partnership for Learning and a list of members of the National Coalition for Parent and Community Involvement in Education (NCPIE) are also included. Contains 55 references. (EV)

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Teachers

Manual

for Parent and Community Involvement



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TEACHER'S MANUAL FOR PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

By

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OVERVIEW

The important role that the classroom teacher plays in parent and community involvement efforts is the focus of this publication. The materials in this manual have been collected, adapted, condensed, or developed over the past five years for use in graduate classes and units in school-community relations, community education, educational partnerships, and family and community involvement. Individual sections have been used for presentations and workshops targeted to specific professional and community groups. More than 30 colleagues in the Community Education Computer Network (CENET) provided comments and suggestions. This publication may be used for reference, as the basis for a course, or in individual units for topical presentations. Some of the contents have been extracted, updated, and expanded from the *Home-School-Community Relations: Trainers Manual and Study Guide* (1994) by Larry E. Decker and Associates.

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FOREWORD

Finding a New Fit for the Family, Community, and Schools

Our schools need new ways to think about and foster parental and community involvement in education. To be sure, some schools and communities have implemented innovative arrangements for school-family collaborations and various configurations of school-based community services. But, at bottom, little fundamental change has occurred in educators' thinking about the role of school, family, and community.

We hold fast, and not without good reason, to schools' and teachers' hard-won autonomy. We see only supporting roles for parents and communities in the education of children—expanded roles, perhaps, but supporting all the same. We are ambivalent about taking on more community responsibilities, especially when societal problems are growing, and community organizations—churches, youth organizations, settlement houses, and so forth—are in even more difficulty than schools.

Most of all, we yearn for the good old days of the 1950s and '60s, when newly educated and affluent parents in burgeoning communities presented us with both the baby boom and unparalleled financial support.

We must put that nostalgic vision behind us. Like most "good old days," it was not as great as our memory suggests—ask poor or minority people how they remember it. And it will never happen again; too much sweeping change has occurred in families, schools, and communities even to imagine it.

We must develop a new perspective, and it must rest on three challenging propositions:

- Schools cannot succeed nowadays (or, to put it more strongly, schools will fail) without the collaboration of parents and communities.
- Families need unprecedentedly strong support to become and remain functional.
- Communities must take charge of all the developmental needs of their children.

It will be difficult and painful to assent fully to these propositions. Building up families and communities will ultimately strengthen education, to be sure, but the process may be tumultuous to the extent that it will involve parents and community leaders claiming prerogatives and assuming new roles in realms of school activity that educators now solely exercise.

It will mean, for example, collaborative curricula and pedagogical decisions affecting both schools and individual students. It may mean giving up ownership of facilities or at least sharing them more widely. It also may mean more limited autonomy for school districts and boards. It will involve discarding our long-held stereotypical views of how families function, and learning how to take today's families on their own, rather than the school's terms.

This challenge must call forth bravery, above all. But the outcome will be more than worth it—a community crusade for children with schools that are redesigned and reinvigorated.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The premise of providing training for teachers and other educators in a content area called "home-school-community involvement" is obvious: schools don't operate in a vacuum. If people who work in schools expect to be successful in their primary mission of educating the community's children, they need to know a great deal about the community and the families from which the children come.

Like many issues in public education, that proposition is not as simple as it sounds. For one thing, no two communities are exactly alike. For another, different communities influence schools in different ways. And finally, communities and families are constantly changing in a variety of ways, some of them highly gratifying and others thoroughly discouraging.

The past decade has been challenging indeed for public educators. They have been chastised for rising dropout rates and falling test scores; for a shortage of good teachers; and for a surplus of public school graduates who lack basic skills. The crisis in confidence has been more painful and prolonged than the one that followed the Soviet launch of Sputnik, and there are no men-on-the-moon in training.

The urge for a quick fix has been almost irresistible. In a frantic search for easy answers, some critics have been willing to overlook an inconvenient but undeniable fact: educational problems reflect community and family problems in all their complexity, diversity, and intractability. In too many communities, children are hungry, sick, abused, or neglected.

Of course we need strong schools, literate and law-abiding youth, and competitive workers for the new global economy. The goal of improving public schools is about as controversial as motherhood and apple pie. But the facts are that 80 percent of taxpayers no longer have children in public schools and that many taxpayers no longer trust public educators to spend their tax dollars wisely. Public school teachers and administrators who ignore skeptical taxpayers and the almost 80 percent of households without children do so at their own peril. They will pay a heavy price as public support erodes further in the years ahead. And school systems that do not develop policies and programs to involve families and communities as educational allies will not make much progress in their reform efforts.

Is it possible to restore public confidence in our unique American system of free public education for all? That is the question and the challenge. We must begin by defining the essential role of home and community, with an assessment of where we are now in terms of understanding that role.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

I-1. School Is Out—Learning Is In

Why has a decade of reform produced so little? Perhaps it is, in part, because our current educational practices are bound by time, place, efficiency, and teachers themselves. For example:

- The system is *time-bound* by credit hours and semester courses. Excellent teachers know that learning is not constrained to one-hour meetings, and they have been frustrated in teaching within these prescribed boundaries.
- The system is *place-bound*. Learning is initiated, nurtured, monitored, and certified primarily by teachers in classrooms. Distance education is a nontraditional delivery system for traditional education. Work-based learning is built around the structure of the school; it still binds the student to a place.
- The system is *efficiency-bound*. Our model of education reflects in great part the adjustment to an agricultural economy. When the country changed to the industrial economy, education responded by creating a lock-step, put-them-in-boxes, factory model—the basis of American education today. Academic credit, based on time in class, makes learning appear orderly. The entire system of schooling is based on grades accumulated as credits.
- The system is *teacher-bound*. In education, we make the assumption that one human being, the teacher, can ensure that 30 very different human beings, one hour a day, three or more days a week for 16 weeks, can learn enough to become enlightened citizens, productive workers, and joyful lifelong learners. Then we assume that this one human being can repeat this miracle three more times in the same 16-week period for 90 additional individuals. Furthermore, we have saddled teachers with the expectation that they must be both experts in rapidly expanding fields of knowledge and gifted lecturers. Yet we provide little comfort and support when they fail to live up to the myth. This teacher-centered process, in fact, may be system's greatest weakness.

We need to replace the current education system with a system designed for the kind of society in which we live today, designed for the kinds of students who attend school today, and designed to take advantage of what we know about learning and what we know about technology today.

SOURCE: O'Banion, T. "School Is Out—Learning Is In," *On the Horizon*, 3(5), June/July 1995.

I-2. Placing Learning First

The emerging transformation in education places learning first, before teaching. The new transformation is based on the following guidelines:

- *The purpose of school is to improve and expand student learning.*
 - Students want to learn. Students learn differently. They learn from each other.
 - Students need customized learning, learning that offers many options, including stand-alone technology and opportunities to learn outside as well as inside school.
 - All students need a pre-K to 90 system, for learning is lifelong and continuous. They need a system that allows them access 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 - The system must provide road maps, itineraries, optional routes, tours, and rest stops for feedback, opportunities to make new connections, and access to major databases and expert systems throughout the world. Students must be allowed to

change direction, move back and forth, make U-turns for remediation, and call for assistance when they hit roadblocks.

- *Student assessment is critical.*
 - Teachers, staff, and administrators must pay more attention to assessing student abilities, achievements, values, goals, expectations, and environmental limitations.
 - Students need learning portfolios encompassing what they know, what they don't know, what they want to know, and what they need to know.
 - Standards for initial entry into and exit from all formal learning activities must be clearly articulated.
 - Learning outcomes must focus on "What does this student know?" and "What can this student do?"
- *Faculty and staff roles must change.*
 - Teachers must design and manage, not deliver, learning experiences.
 - Teachers must be evaluated on how well they implement new learning opportunities for students in a system that is not time-bound, place-bound, efficiency-bound, or teacher-bound.

SOURCE: O'Banion, T. "School Is Out—Learning Is In," *On the Horizon*, 3(5), June/July 1995.

I-3. Forces of Resistance

As tentative guidelines for the emerging transformation that places learning first are translated into action, there will be resistance from bureaucracies, school personnel, and the students themselves.

- *Bureaucratic resistance*
 - Federal and state programs are difficult to dismantle.
 - Schools have developed cumbersome and often politically structured systems. Although designed for effective, efficient, and fair management, these systems frequently inhibit creative ventures that differ from established norms.
- *Personnel resistance*
 - Most educators understand the old adage, "It is easier to move a cemetery than change the curriculum."
 - Educators, themselves "schooled" first as students, then as gatekeepers in the traditions of education, do not embrace alternative ideas with enthusiasm, despite their own cynicism about the current system.
 - Administrators, especially school-site administrators, are most resistant to change. Their position is particularly stressful as they attempt to negotiate between the faculty and central administration, a land in which school-site administrators may find no safe haven or affiliate group.
 - Secretaries, custodians, and other support staff who operate key components of the school's infrastructure will resist changes that make them more visible partners with the professional staff.

- *Student resistance*
 - The greatest resistance to placing learning first may come from students (and their parents). Students know classes; they know schedules; and they know about grades, especially getting A's.
 - Placing learning first would mean having students take responsibility for their own learning, navigating their own pathways.
 - Students will need a great deal of orientation to this new paradigm, and they will need early successes.

SOURCE: O'Banion, T. "School Is Out—Learning Is In," *On the Horizon*, 3(5), June/July 1995.

I-4. Learning and School Environments

There is mounting evidence that many characteristics of the designed physical environment of schools can and do affect attitudes, behaviors, and academic achievement. Some effects result from a direct impact of the building environment on education, while others are indirect linkages between architectural characteristics and intervening psychological, physiological, and behavioral factors like cognitive fatigue, distraction, motivation, emotional affect, anxiety, and communication. The bottom line is that a well-designed and well-maintained facility can, and does, make a difference in our children's lives. However—

- There is a crisis in America's school buildings.
 - Nationwide, 74 percent of school buildings were built before 1970.
 - Twelve percent have been judged inadequate because they are too old, too small, have deteriorating mechanical systems, and/or seriously need window replacement.
- Studies show that student attitudes about education directly reflect the quality of their learning environments.
- Many professional educators and others understand that the physical characteristics of schools can directly influence learning, while others ignore this connection.

Studies of the quality of the physical environment of educational facilities show that it does matter to the process of learning and educational achievement.

- Architectural features affect learning.
 - Thermal factors affect task performance, attention spans, and achievement.
 - Short-term noise and poor acoustics are linked to classroom distraction and to lower student and teacher morale.
 - Long-term noise from nearby streets leads to significant increases in blood pressure, decreased ability to concentrate, increased number of errors on difficult tasks, and greater likelihood of giving up on complex tasks.
 - Spatial density and crowding increase behavioral problems, aggressive behavior, distraction on complex tasks, and decreased satisfaction.
 - Classroom furniture layouts influence persistence, participation, and attitudes toward class and other students.
 - Windowless classrooms lead to more negative student and teacher attitudes.

- Private or secluded study spaces reduce visual and auditory interruptions, increase privacy, contribute to longer attention spans, lead to more student questions, make learning materials more accessible, and increase literature use.
- Small schools are better.
 - Relative to large schools (1,500 or more students), smaller schools (about 500 students) offer more opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities and to exercise leadership roles.
 - Student satisfaction is higher, participation in student organizations is greater, crime levels are lower, and student misconduct is less serious in small schools.
 - Other things held constant, more classes are taken per student, math and verbal ability is higher, and overall student achievement is higher in small schools.
 - Smaller schools benefit African-American and urban students in particular.
- Smaller class sizes and lower class density are better.
 - As class size decreases, voluntary participation increases, classroom management improves, student attitudes improve, teacher stress decreases, and teachers are more likely to try innovative teaching techniques.
 - Conversely, high-density conditions lead to increased aggression, decreased social interaction, and less involvement.
 - As class size decreases (e.g., about 15 students with 1 teacher), students outperform matched groups of students in larger class sizes (over 20 per class) on all subjects, but especially in reading and mathematics (average improvements of 15 percent). These results are the same even when the larger classes have the additional benefit of a full-time teacher aide.
 - The findings are consistent for all K-3 grade levels and in rural, urban, suburban, and inner-city locations.
 - Follow-up studies show that students in smaller classes in the early primary grades continue to have significant advantages two years later. Performance gains in different schools ranged from 11 to 34 percent, with the greatest gains being for inner-city and minority students.

SOURCE: Moore, G. T. "Learning and School Environments," *Edutopia*, 3(1), Summer 1995.

I-5. Education's Misleading Myths

Myths about the American public schools may be misleading the majority of citizens and undermining the confidence of the American people in our schools.

- MYTH 1. Today's youths are not as smart as those of recent generations.
FACT: Today's students actually average about 15 IQ points higher than their grandparents did, and average about 7 points higher than their parents.
- MYTH 2. Today's youths cannot think as well as those of recent generations.
FACT: The large gains in measured intelligence throughout the industrialized world have not been observed in the areas of the tests that call for general knowledge, or for

verbal or quantitative ability. The major gains in intelligence test performance have been primarily in the areas of general problem-solving skills and the ability to handle abstract information of a decontextualized nature—in the areas generally labeled “thinking skills.”

- MYTH 3. The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) has shown a marked decrease in mean score over the last 25 years, indicating the failure of our schools and our teachers in performing their function.

FACT: Although, there has been a decline since 1965 in the average SAT score for our nation's youth, the explanation for this loss is simple—a much greater number of students in the bottom 60 percent of their class have been taking the SAT since the 1960s.

- MYTH 4. The bottom students now score better on achievement tests, but there has been a decrease in the performance of the better students. Our top students are not as proficient as they were.

FACT: The SAT performance of all test takers was unusually stable between 1975 and 1990. But if we separate students who match those who formerly took the SAT test (primarily white, suburban, middle and upper middle class, higher school rank, etc.) from the overall pool of test takers, we see an increase of over 30 SAT points, an increase of over 10 percentile ranks compared to the overall and undifferentiated group of SAT takers.

- MYTH 5. The performance of American students on standardized achievement tests reveals gross inadequacies.

FACT: Scientists reviewing the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, given to a national sample of 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds in the subject matters of mathematics, science, reading, writing, geography, and computer skills, believe unequivocally that the national data does not indicate a decline in any area, and that students today appear to be as well-educated as previous generations of students.

- MYTH 6. Money is unrelated to the productivity of schools.

FACT: States that have spent the most on their schools have produced citizens who have earned the most dollars in income. Higher salaries attract teachers with higher academic ability and keep them in the profession longer.

- MYTH 7. The American public school system is a bloated bureaucracy, top-heavy in administrators and administrative costs.

FACT: The average number of employees that each administrator supervises in education is among the highest of any industry or business in the U.S.; central office professionals plus principals, assistant principals, and supervisors account for only 4.5 percent of the total employee population of the schools.

- MYTH 8. American schools are too expensive. We spend more on education than any other country in the world, and we have little to show for it.

FACT: In 1988 dollars, we ranked ninth among 16 industrialized nations in per-pupil expenditures in grades K-12. That is 14 percent less than Germany, 30 percent less than Japan, and 51 percent less than Switzerland. If we were to come up to the average percentage of per capita income of the 16 other industrialized nations, we would have to invest an additional \$20 billion per year in K-12 education.

- MYTH 9. Our high schools, colleges, and universities are not supplying us with enough mathematicians and scientists to maintain our competitiveness in world markets.

FACT: There is solid data to suggest that the supply is exceeding the demand; when demand as well as supply is investigated, it shows that the economy is now able to absorb all the scientists and engineers that we produce.

- MYTH 10. The United States is an enormous failure in international comparisons of educational achievement.

FACT: According to many visitors to the U.S., we have some of the most creative and spontaneous children the world has ever seen, and our students go on to more challenging schooling at the college level in numbers that are the envy of the world.

- MYTH 11. American productivity has fallen, and a major cause is the education of the work force.

FACT: According to the 1992 report of one of our nation's most prestigious management consulting firms, there has been no decline in American productivity. It is true that productivity in other countries has grown at a faster rate than ours, but productivity in those countries was historically low, and their rates of increase are not nearly as steep as they approach our rate of productivity. In addition, when the various factors that can influence the productivity of a nation are examined—market conditions, labor unions, government regulations, management behavior, available capital, skill of the labor force, etc.—the only variable found to predict productivity across nations was the behavior of management; the educational level of the labor force was unrelated to productivity.

A FINAL NOTE. We have troubled schools; but in those school populations, we see poverty, inadequate health care, dysfunctional families, and dysfunctional neighborhoods.

SOURCE: Berliner, D. C. "Education's Present Misleading Myths Undermine Confidence in One of America's Most Cherished Institutions," *Journal of Educational Public Relations*, 15(2) December 1993.

I-6. Ten Truths of Parent Involvement

- All parents have hopes and goals for their children. They differ in how they support their children's efforts to achieve those goals.
- The home is one of several spheres that simultaneously influence a child. The school must work with other spheres for the child's benefit, not push them apart.

- The parent is the chief contributor to a child's education. Schools can either co-opt the parent's role or recognize the parent's potential.
- Parent involvement must be a legitimate element of education. It deserves equal emphasis with such elements as program improvement and evaluation.
- Parent involvement is a process, not a program of activities. It requires ongoing energy and effort.
- Parent involvement requires a vision, a policy, a framework, and a consensus of understanding.
- Parents' interaction with their own children is the cornerstone of involvement. A program must recognize the value, diversity, and difficulty of this role.
- Most barriers to parent involvement are found within school practices, not within parents.
- Any parent can be "hard to reach." Parents must be approached individually; they are not defined by gender, ethnicity, family situation, education, or income.
- Successful parent involvement nurtures relationships and partnerships. It strengthens bonds between home and school, parent and educator, parent and child, and school and community.

SOURCE: National Community Education Association, conference handout, 1994.

I-7. School-Community Issues: An Attitudinal Survey

Instructions: The following statements are designed to gather opinions regarding school-community issues. Indicate your response by circling one of the following responses: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD).

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Schools should be more involved in delivering social services. | SA A N D SD |
| 2. Teachers should be encouraged to visit the homes of their students. | SA A N D SD |
| 3. Parents should be encouraged to visit their children's classrooms. | SA A N D SD |
| 4. Home and community environments may be more important determinants of academic achievement than the school environment. | SA A N D SD |
| 5. School buildings should serve as before- and after-school and year-round community centers. | SA A N D SD |
| 6. A danger of involving community members in the schools is that ultimately they will want to control them. | SA A N D SD |
| 7. Volunteers are of limited value in schools. | SA A N D SD |
| 8. Special-interest groups create difficulties for schools. | SA A N D SD |
| 9. Almost all school systems have effective programs and activities that facilitate home-school-community communication. | SA A N D SD |
| 10. Community members should be part of the decision-making process in the school. | SA A N D SD |
| 11. Teachers should be empowered to make curriculum and instructional decisions. | SA A N D SD |

SOURCE: Decker, L. E. Class handout, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

Suggested Group Activity

For an inservice or class activity, have everyone complete the above survey. Then, taking one question at a time, have individuals indicate their responses by a show of hands. Ask those who indicated SA or A to give the rationale for their response; then do the same with those who responded D or SD. To avoid a heated debate, ask to hear only one side of an issue at a time.

I-8. Understanding Your Community

In order to work effectively in a community, you need to know:

- Population data and characteristics.
- Customs and traditions.
- Political system characteristics and organization.
- Communications channels.
- Significant community groups and organizations.
- Economic conditions.
- Patterns of employment/unemployment.
- Political structures and power brokers (both formal and informal).
- Social structures, tensions, and problems that affect the learner and the school.
- Community resources and services.
- School-community interrelationships.
- Geographic strengths and weaknesses.

SOURCE: Decker, L. E. Class handout, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

I-9. America's Smallest School: The Family

While it has long been recognized that family environment has an impact on a child's educational achievement, school personnel often fail to take this into consideration when working with the children entering today's schools. *America's Smallest School: The Family* provides a reminder of just how important the family can be in helping a child succeed.

- Students living with both parents have higher proficiency in school, even after controlling for other key factors.
- The more types of reading materials there are in the home, the higher a student's reading proficiency.
- Students who do more reading at home are better readers.
- Students who watch a lot of TV have lower academic proficiency.
- The amount of homework done by students has been shown to be positively related to achievement.
- Student absence is directly correlated to decreased academic achievement.
- The degree to which parents talk about school and assume an active role in school matters is directly correlated to student achievement.
- Income and resources in the home account substantially for children's success in school.

SOURCE: Barton, P. E., and Coley, R. J. *America's Smallest School: The Family*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1992.

I-10. The Leverage of the Nine Percent

The school consumes a surprisingly small portion of American children's lives. Since most schools still operate about 180 days a year and students are in class six hours per day, the young person who graduates from high school will have spent just 9 percent of his/her life under a school roof. What is the leverage of the 9 percent—

- When the other 91 percent works at cross-purposes?
- When out-of-school conditions are hostile?
- When other agencies don't carry their share of the responsibility?
- When a child's tangled problems exceed his/her capability, especially where the home situation is itself destructive?

SOURCE: Finn C. E. Jr. "We Must Take Charge: Our Schools and Our Future," cited in Chimerine, C.B.; Panton, K. L.; and Russo, A. W. W. *The Other 91 Percent: Strategies to Improve the Quality of Out-of-School Experiences of Chapter 1 Students*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 1993.

I-11. Why the Focus on Parent and Community Involvement in the Education of Children?

A confluence of several forces has helped generate the current interest in school reform and the focus on parent and community involvement as one critical reform strategy:

- Demographic projections of student composition and student needs in the twenty-first century.
- Arguments about the necessity to transform the American economy and the role of schools in improving workforce skills.
- The rising social costs that poor school performance and resulting low skills impose.
- The renewed vision and practice of advocates and progressive reformers.

SOURCE: Fruchter, N.; Galletta, A.; and White, J. L. *New Directions in Parent Involvement*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, 1992.

II. DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS INFLUENCING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Not so long ago, public schools first encountered children when they were five or six years old. The experiences of these little ones over the preceding preschool years were assumed to be benign and of little professional interest to teachers and administrators. Now, every educator is acutely aware of the critical importance of a child's early years, even while acknowledging that public institutions can't control everything that happens to a child between birth and kindergarten. What schools can do is *help*, by working with parents and families as early as possible, trying to improve family literacy and parenting skills, and building strong, positive relationships between families and schools.

Even a brief examination of the demographics of American society at the end of the 20th century shows the enormity of the challenge educators face. Most striking, perhaps, is the growth in the incidence of poverty in the youngest segments of our population. The Children's Defense Fund points out regularly that all age groups of our children are poorer today than they were at the beginning of the decade, and that between now and the year 2000, growth in the child population will consist of children living in poverty.

Reliable research has demonstrated the link between poverty and the patterns of behavior associated with school failure. Fortunately, research has also shown that there *are* things schools can do, working with the home and community, to improve school performance, and therefore, the lives and chances of all children.

The first step is to develop a thorough knowledge of the community's demographics and an understanding of how community conditions affect the work of the public educator. That is the focus of this unit.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

II-1. U.S. Population Growth and Decline

(By age, from 1980 to 1990)

Age Groups That Got Larger		Age Groups That Got Smaller	
35 to 44	+33.8%	5 to 13	- 1.1%
85 and over	+28.0%	18 to 24	- 9.7%
75 to 84	+20.3%	14 to 17	-11.0%
25 to 34	+16.8%		
65 to 74	+13.4%		
under 5	+11.6%		
45 to 54	+ 2.1%		
55 to 64	+ 1.5%		

SOURCE: Hodgkinson, H. *The Same Client: The Demographics of Education and Service Delivery Systems*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1989.

II-2. The Traditional American Family, 1955-1992

1955 60% of households in U.S. consisted of a traditional family:

- Working father and housewife mother
- Two or more school-age children

1980 11% of U.S. households consisted of a traditional family.

1985 7% of U.S. households consisted of a traditional family.

1992 6% of U.S. households consisted of a traditional family.

Of every 100 children born in 1986:

- The parents of 40 will divorce before the children are 18.
- 12 were born out of wedlock.
- 2 will have a parent die before the children reach 18.
- Only 41 will reach 18 living with the two original parents.

SOURCE: Hodgkinson, H. *The Same Client: The Demographics of Education and Service Delivery Systems*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1989.

II-3. Changes in Household Type, 1980-1990

	Number of Households (thousands), 1990	% Change 1980-90
Total households	93,347	+15.5%
Married couples, no children	27,780	+15.0%
Married couples w/ children*	24,537	- 1.7%
Single parent* — women	6,599	+21.2%
Single parent* — men	1,153	+87.2%
Singles living alone	22,999	+25.7%
Singles living with non-relatives	4,258	+45.3%

*Children under age 18

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau. *Current Population Survey: Household and Family Characteristics*. Washington, DC, 1991.

II-4. Disappearing Dads

Kids Living With	1960	1980	1990
Father and mother	80.6%	62.3%	57.7%
Mother only	7.7	18.0	21.6
Father only	1.0	1.7	3.1
Father and stepmother	0.8	1.1	0.9
Mother and stepfather	5.9	8.4	10.4
Neither parent	3.9	5.8	4.3

May not add exactly due to rounding.

SOURCE: Blankenhorn, D. *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.

II-5. Projections of the U.S. Population, Age 0-17, 1990-2010 (in millions)

<u>Youth</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change</u>
Total youth*	64.4	64.9	+0.5
White, non-Hispanic	45.2	41.4	-3.8
Hispanic (of any race)	7.2	9.8	+2.6
Black**	10.2	11.4	+1.2
Other races	2.2	2.8	+0.6

Increase in total nonwhite youth +4.4 million

Decrease in total white youth -3.8 million

*May not add exactly due to rounding.

**Includes small number of Hispanics; "other races" are primarily Asian and Native American.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, cited in National Center for Education Statistics, *Youth Indicators*. Washington, DC, 1991.

II-6. Vulnerable Family Index

In 1990, 1,689,118 U.S. families were formed with the birth of a first baby. Many of these families were at risk from the start for one or more reasons:

- The mother was under 20.
- The mother had not completed high school.
- The parents were unmarried.

Of the new families formed in 1990:

- 11% had all three risk factors.
- 24% had two risk factors.
- 45% had at least one risk factor.

Children in poverty (ages 7-12, 1988) by number of risk factors:

- All three risk factors 79%
- Two risk factors 48%
- One risk factor 26%
- No risk factors 8%

Children ranked in lower half of school class (ages 7-12, 1988) by number of risk factors:

- All three risk factors 58%
- Two risk factors 53%
- One risk factor 47%
- No risk factors 30%

SOURCE: Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Kids Count Data Book*. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1993.

II-7. Children Living in Severely Distressed Neighborhoods

The 1994 *Kids Count Data Book* reports that 6.2 percent of all children under age 18 live in severely distressed neighborhoods. Severely distressed neighborhoods have at least four of the five following characteristics:

- High poverty rate (above 27.5%).
- High percent of female-headed families (above 39.6%).
- High percent of high school dropouts (above 23.3%).
- High percent of males unattached to the labor force (above 46.5%).
- High percent of families receiving public assistance income (above 17.0%).

SOURCE: Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Kids Count Data Book*. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1994.

II-8. The Children of Single-Parent Families

Of children who live with:	<u>Unmarried</u> <u>Mothers</u>	<u>Divorced</u> <u>Mothers</u>	<u>Both</u> <u>Parents</u>
Live in poverty	63%	34%	11%
Repeated a grade in school	33%	23%	13%
Have been suspended or expelled	17%	11%	5%
Live in families that have been on welfare for more than 10 years	39%	14%	n/a

Of children in correctional facilities, 56% had lived with one parent, 28% with both parents.

SOURCE: "The War Over Family Values," *U.S. News & World Report*, June 8, 1992, 35.

II-9. Children and Families

- Of all children born today, 23 percent are born outside of marriage.
- 15.3 million children live with one parent, the mother in 90 percent of cases:
 - 50 percent of white children live with a divorced mother.
 - 54 percent of black children live with a never-married mother.
 - 33 percent of Hispanic children's mothers are unmarried.
- Today, 40 percent of the poor are children; poverty for children aged 0-5 (now 23 percent of all young children) is increasing. The increase is directly related to the fact that the children are in a one-parent, female-headed household.
 - Average income for married couples with children is \$36,206.
 - Average income for female-headed households with children is \$11,299.
- Regardless of race, poor young women are three to four times more likely to become unwed mothers than are affluent young women. Early childbearing is highly correlated with lower educational attainment and unemployment.

SOURCE: William T. Grant Foundation. *Youth and America's Future: A Statistical Snapshot*. Washington, DC: Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, June 1987; Hodgkinson, H. *The Same Client*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1989.

II-10. SAT Scores by Family Income

<u>Family Income</u>	<u>SAT Averages</u>	
	<u>Verbal</u>	<u>Math</u>
Less than \$10,000	353	415
\$10,000 - \$20,000	379	434
\$20,000 - \$30,000	404	452
\$30,000 - \$40,000	418	466
\$40,000 - \$50,000	430	480
\$50,000 - \$60,000	440	491
\$60,000 - \$70,000	449	500
More than \$70,000	469	528

SOURCE: *U.S. News & World Report*, September 9, 1991.

II-11. Household Income in 1990 Dollars

<u>Income Category</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Poorest Fifth	\$7,357	\$6,973	-5.2
Next Poorest Fifth	16,008	16,124	+0.2
Middle Fifth	24,031	24,691	+2.7
Next Richest Fifth	32,075	34,824	+8.6
Richest Fifth	58,886	78,032	+32.5

SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office, Washington, DC, 1990.

Suggested Group Activity

Research clearly indicates the powerful influence the family can have on student achievement. What policies and programs should schools adopt to strengthen and encourage the family role in enhancing student academic achievement?

II-12. Demographic Issues for the Year 2000

- What is "majority?" What is "minority?" The distinction is becoming a socio-economic issue, not a race issue.
- By the year 2000, one third of all children will be economically disadvantaged.
- The support base for education is eroding:
 - Only 20 percent of U. S. households have school-aged children.
 - American society is aging (the political phenomenon of "grey power").
- Education systems need proactive outreach efforts to connect communities with education.
- Potential for intergenerational conflict:
 - In 1940, there were 17 workers for every Social Security recipient.
 - In 1990, there were 3 workers for every Social Security recipient.
 - In 2000, there will be only 2 workers for every Social Security recipient.

- More coordinated social services will be needed, and schools will be required to fill voids.
- Growing numbers of working women will contribute to a growing need for comprehensive child-care services.
- Public education must be viewed as a right and a responsibility of all citizens; this will require a broader definition of education.

SOURCE: Decker, L. E. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

II-13. Growing Up Is Risky Business and Schools Are Not to Blame

What causes risk:

- Personal pain
- Academic failure
- Family tragedy
- Family socio-economic status
- Family instability

How to help students at risk:

- Understanding
- Caring
- Cultivating a sense of responsibility
- Nurturing academic achievement and skills

SOURCE: "Growing Up Is Risky Business and Schools Are Not to Blame," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 1990.

II-14. Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll — Grading the Public Schools

The annual PDK/Gallup Poll has become a primary source for measuring public attitudes toward the public schools. The 1993 poll registered the largest one-year improvement in the grades given by the public to their local public schools since the question was first asked in 1974. The percentage of respondents awarding A's or B's jumped from 40 percent in 1992 to 47 percent in 1993, after nearly a decade of relative stability. College graduates in particular gave high ratings (54 percent A or B). However, 1994 and 1995 data show a drop in grades.

The question: Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here — A, B, C, D, or FAIL?

Ratings Given to the Local Public Schools

<u>Grade</u>	<u>National Totals</u>	<u>No Children in Schools</u>	<u>Public School Parents</u>	<u>Nonpublic School Parents</u>
	%	%	%	%
A & B	41	38	49	23
A	8	6	12	6
B	33	32	37	17
C	37	38	34	40
D	12	11	12	23
FAIL	5	5	4	10
Don't Know	5	8	1	4

RATINGS GIVEN TO THE LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	1995 %	1994 %	1993 %	1992 %	1991 %	1990 %	1989 %	1988 %	1987 %	1986 %	1985 %
A & B	41	44	47	40	42	41	43	40	43		43
A	8	9	10	9	10	8	8	9	12	11	9
B	33	35	37	31	32	33	35	31	31	30	34
C	37	30	31	33	33	34	33	34	30	28	30
D	12	14	11	12	10	12	11	10	9	11	10
Fail	5	7	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4
Don't Know	5	5	7	10	10	8	9	12	14	15	13

Poll respondents were also asked to grade the *nation's* public schools. As has been true in all past years, the "nation's schools" came off a poor second to "local schools" in the current poll. Whereas 41% of the public thought their own schools merit either an A or a B, only 20 percent awarded these grades to schools of the nation as a whole.

SOURCE: Elam, S. M.; Rose, L. C.; and Gallup, A. M. *The 26th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Polls of the Public Attitudes towards the Public Schools*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, 1995.

II-15. Summary of *A Look at Tomorrow*

- In 2010, four states (New York, Texas, California, and Florida) will have about one third of the nation's youth, and more than half of them will be "minority." The *real* minority will be non-Hispanic white children in these key states. What will we call "minorities" when they make up more than half the population? And how will these states interact with Maine, which will have 3 percent minority youth in 2010?
- In the 1960s, housing moved to the suburbs. In the 1980s, so did everything else: jobs, churches, colleges, movies, and shopping. How can cities survive if we define success as moving to a suburb? What would it take to get middle-income people to move back to the cities? Many "urban" problems—crime, drugs, poverty, violence—will continue to spread to the suburbs. How can we govern a metro area that includes both cities and their now-dominant suburbs?
- Currently 82 percent of all children have working mothers. Business and government must respond to the rapidly increasing demand for child care. Sixty percent of all children will spend some time with a single parent before reaching age 18, making the single-parent family the new "typical American family."
- The U.S. population is aging rapidly. There are currently 30 million people over age 65; this will increase to 65 million by 2020. Many will have one year of retirement for every year of work. Children under age 18 (34 percent of our total population in 1970) will be 25 percent of our population in 2000. Yet, even as children are becoming increasingly scarce, approximately 30 percent of children in 1992 are at serious risk of failure in school and in life.
- Now that there are sizable populations of middle-class blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, many racial problems are actually issues of race *and* class. The single factor that holds the most children back is poverty, regardless of race.
- The U.S. population increased 10 percent between 1980 and 1990; the prison population exploded by 139 percent. Prisoners cost taxpayers more than \$20,000 per individual annually; 80 percent are high school dropouts. We now lead the world in the percentage of our population behind bars. One prisoner consumes the amount of money it would cost to enroll six children in Head Start programs.
- The "middle" of our society is declining, while the numbers of rich and poor are increasing. We are creating two workforces: one in minimum-wage jobs, the other in well-paying jobs. For every new job created for a computer programmer, eight new jobs are created for food service workers. This leads to an "information-rich" and "information-poor" split in our society.

- Those who are concerned about the test scores of U. S. students compared to the test scores of Asian students should compare the test scores of U. S. inner city students to the test scores of U.S. suburban students.

SOURCE: Hodgkinson, H. *A Demographic Look at Tomorrow*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1992.

Suggested Group Activity

- Imagine you are part of a school-based task force brought together to look at demographic trends in your community. Identify the five most critical demographic factors and project how they will impact the educational programs in your schools for the next three to five years.
- Discuss the implications for the workforce of the year 2000 of having fewer students and more poor students who are at risk of school failure.
- Compare the national demographic trends presented here with the projected demographics of your community in the year 2000. What are the implications for local schools and schooling?

III. CHANGING ATTITUDES

Many parents and educators once shared the opinion that after a child enters school, it is best to leave his or her education to the professionals. After all, the argument went, they are the ones trained to do the job. Besides, the structure of modern curricula is probably too complex for most parents to grasp (remember New Math?). And what about parents who can barely read or write—how can they help their children learn anything?

Now we know better. Although our common sense may have whispered it all along, the research is now overwhelmingly clear: parent involvement—and that means involvement by all kinds of parents—improves student achievement.

Parent involvement is now a major component of almost all efforts to restructure schools. Parental roles took on heightened status in the 1980s due to the school effectiveness movement, the implementation of site-based management in some schools, the issue of school choice, and a growing body of research demonstrating that parent involvement has a significant impact on student achievement.

Additional impetus was provided at the national level by *America 2000: An Education Strategy*, an agenda for education reform adopted by President George Bush and the nation's governors in 1990. The "America 2000" strategy was expanded under the Clinton administration, with a new name "Goals 2000." Goals 2000 added two goals that focus on teacher training and parental involvement. They read:

- All teachers will have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to prepare U.S. students for the next century.
- Every school will promote parental involvement in their children's education.

While it is clear that no one group can deal with the myriad of problems children face today, schools are being challenged to take a leadership role. Harold Hodgkinson poses the challenge to schools in the form of two questions:

- What can educators do that they are not already doing...to get [children] achieving well in a school setting?
- How can educators collaborate more closely with other service providers so they all work together to provide services to children and families?

The key to answering these questions lies in redefining and using the concept of "we." In the context of education, "we" is the home, school, and community working together in the framework of a democratic society. The challenge is not to divide up the responsibilities, but to reconceptualize the role of schools and the relationships among school, home, community, and the larger society.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

III-1. Characteristics of Effective Schools

- Instructional leadership by principal and staff.
- Clear school mission.
- Opportunity to learn and student time on task.
- High expectations.
- Frequent monitoring of student progress and program effectiveness.
- Positive, safe, orderly learning environment.
- Positive home-school relations.

SOURCE: Canady, L. Lecture. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. May 1995.

III-2. A Comparison of Family Practices and School Factors That Contribute to a Child's School Success

The following table illustrates the similarity between family practices that contribute to a child's success in school and school factors that contribute to increased student achievement.

Family Practices That Support Children's Learning	Effective School Characteristics That Parallel Family Practices
Playing games Reading and listening to children read Encouraging hobbies Visiting parks, museums, cultural events Talking with children about school events	Opportunity to learn Time on task Leadership
Supervising TV viewing Guiding homework Setting daily routines and schedules Supervising after-school activities	Leadership Monitoring progress Use of time
Visiting the school Advocating for child's needs	Home-school relations
Expressing affection, love Praising child for school and homework Providing food, clothing, shelter Assigning chores Organizing productive after-school activities	Safe, positive learning environment
Stimulating intellectual pursuits Modeling reading, writing, math, other intellectual activities	Academic focus
Holding high aspirations Expecting high school graduation and college attendance	High expectations

SOURCE: Chrispeels, J. *Using an Effective Schools Framework to Build Home-School Partnerships for Student Success*. Madison, WI: National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development, University of Wisconsin, 1992.

III-3. Personal Experiences That Influence Attitudes Toward Schools

Several factors affect the public's attitudes toward schools. Many are based on people's past personal experiences, both positive and negative, with schools. The following are some of the ways in which people have personal experiences with schools.

- Experiences as former students.
- First impressions of a new school.
- Reception received at school.
- First contact when there is a problem.
- Immediacy of response to parental concern.
- Child's success or lack of success.
- Experience as volunteer.
- Teacher contact (or lack of contact).
- Parent-teacher conferences.
- Parent group meetings.
- Behavior of children in the neighborhood.

SOURCE: Marx, G. Lecture, Falls Church, VA. American Association of School Administrators, July 1993.

III-4. Barriers to Parental Involvement

The following factors are barriers to parent involvement:

- School practices that do not accommodate the diversity of the families they serve.
 - Parent involvement events and opportunities are scheduled at times that do not allow for participation by working parents.
 - Communications to parents are written in languages that may not be understood by all families.
 - Schools do not provide parents with information or materials they can use at home to support their children's learning.
 - School staff hold conscious or unconscious attitudes that imply that under-involved families do not participate because they do not care about education and have little to add to the school when they do participate.
- Time and child care constraints.
 - Working parents often have difficulty attending school events held during the workday.
 - Parents may have child care responsibilities that prevent them from participating in programs held at the school.
- Negative experiences with schooling.
 - Parents whose own school experiences were unsuccessful or stressful may feel uncomfortable with any interaction with their children's school.
 - Young parents who have not finished high school may feel uncomfortable about reentering a school setting.
- Lack of support for cultural diversity.
 - Parents with non-majority cultural and linguistic backgrounds may feel uncomfortable in school settings that do not explicitly value the diversity they bring.

- Linguistic minority parents who receive only English communications from the school may feel that the school does not respect or value their heritage.
- Parents who have experienced discrimination may feel powerless and alienated from many public institutions.
- Primacy of basic needs.
 - Some families are under extreme pressure from economic stress; the need to address their own food, clothing, and shelter needs takes precedence over involvement in their children's schooling.

SOURCE: Massachusetts Department of Education, Office of Community Education. *Focus on Parents, Strategies for Increasing the Involvement of Underrepresented Families in Education*. Quincy, MA, 1990.

III-5. Practices and Conditions That Contribute to the Non-Involvement of Families

Practices and conditions that contribute to the non-involvement of some families can be categorized as school-based and non-school-based.

School-based practices:

- *Communications*. Does the school, in its written materials for families, use languages and vocabulary that are easily understood by all parents?
- *Scheduling of parental events*. Is there variety and flexibility in the days, times, and locations so that all parents will have an opportunity to attend at least some events?
- *Resources and responsibilities*. Does anyone in the school have designated responsibility for reaching out to and making contact with all families? Are there resources behind this commitment? Has the school considered providing child care or transportation or even offering parents who attend school events reimbursement for these expenses?
- *Attitudes and assumptions*. Is there a widespread recognition that teachers and parents are partners with different but parallel roles to play in the education of children? Are the experiences of linguistic and cultural minority parents recognized as rich resources that can enhance the curriculum of the school?

Non-school-based practices:

- Are local employers asked to release family members from work so they can attend parent-teacher conferences?
- What community agencies do families use? How could teachers and administrators collaborate with these agencies to share information about the schools?
- Would these organizations be willing to host meetings between parents and representatives of the school?
- Are there churches, cultural organizations, health centers, and other institutions that have an interest in families and schools?
- Are there ways in which teachers and administrators can collaborate with these community resources to address the training and information needs of parents?
- Are there ESL and job training classes in the community that may be willing to integrate information on schools into their curriculum?

SOURCE: Freedman, S.; Aschheim, B.; and Zerchykov, R. *Strategies for Increasing the Involvement of Underrepresented Families in Education*. Quincy, MA: Massachusetts Department of Education, 1989.

III-6. Barriers Faced by Poor and Hard-to-Reach Parents

- Children from families that don't conform to middle class norms are often seen by school officials as having trouble in school.
- Communication between schools and poor families is mostly negative. Most of these parents are contacted only when their children are in trouble.
- Teachers and administrators appear to think of these families as deficient and concentrate on problems rather than their strengths.
- School staff believe that the fact of parents being hard to reach is the fault of the parents, not the schools.
- Many poor families think they are unqualified to be involved in their children's schooling.
- Most parents from all groups express a strong desire to be involved in their children's schooling.

SOURCE: National School Public Relations Association. *Helping Parents Help Their Kids*. Arlington, VA, n.d.

III-7. Gain or Loss of Confidence in Schools as Expressed by Citizens

The following are results of a Phi Delta Kappa study conducted to determine what factors most influenced citizens' gain or loss of confidence in the local school.

<u>Rank as Source of Gain</u>	<u>Source of Confidence</u>	<u>Rank as Source of Loss</u>
1	Teacher attitudes	1
2	Administrator attitudes	3
3	Student attitudes	6
4	Academic programs	9
5	Communications	7
6	Community attitudes	5
7	Academic performance	10
8	Instructional quality	11
9	Community involvement	16
10	Staff quality	8
11.5	Non-academic programs	15
11.5	Decision-making process	2
13	Discipline	4
14	Career/college readiness	14
15.5	Buildings/facilities	13
15.5	Funding	12
17	Materials/equipment	17

SOURCE: Phi Delta Kappa Foundation. *Handbook for Developing Public Confidence in School*. Bloomington, IN, 1988.

III-8. Impression of Schools Among Community Leaders

The following are results of a study conducted by Phi Delta Kappa to determine what factors most influenced community leaders' impression of schools.

	<u>Source of Impression*</u>		<u>Most Influential Impression</u>	
	<u>School Level</u>	<u>Districtwide</u>	<u>School Level</u>	<u>Districtwide</u>
School employees	80%	82%	51%	44%
School children	74	75	22	21
Children's parents	73	81	13	8
PTA	30	28	2	5
Media	23	51	1	7
School board	23	51	1	5

*Respondents could check more than one response.

SOURCE: Phi Delta Kappa Foundation. *Handbook for Developing Public Confidence in School*.
Bloomington, IN, 1988.

III-9. Community Leaders' Sources of Confidence at the School-Building Level

The following are results of a Phi Delta Kappa study to determine what sources were most responsible for community leaders' confidence in a school.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Sources of Confidence*</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1.5	Dedicated, committed teachers	75
1.5	Special instructional and extracurricular programs	75
3.5	Effective administrators	61
5	Student-centered "caring" atmosphere	51
6	Positive attitudes of students/staff	40
7	Student discipline	38
8	Good curriculum	36
9	Student achievement	30
10	Parent participation	28
11	Communication with parents	22
12	Public image	22
13.5	High standards, goals, expectations	15
13.5	Board/superintendent relations, policies, decisions	15
15	Administrator/staff community service	13
16	Courteous office staff	12
17	Linkages with other institutions	11
18	Success of graduates	10

*Respondents could check more than one response.

SOURCE: Phi Delta Kappa Foundation. *Handbook for Developing Public Confidence in School*.
Bloomington, IN, 1988.

III-10. Who Was Responsible for Actions That Built Confidence?

The following are results of a study conducted by Phi Delta Kappa to identify the individuals who were most responsible for building confidence in schools.

<u>Person Responsible*</u>	<u>School Level</u>	<u>District Wide</u>
Teachers	65%	45%
Principal	63	39
Non-classroom certified person	42	34
Non-certified school person	30	9
School community (general)	22	24
School board	15	31
Students	15	7
Superintendent	15	48
Other central office staff	11	27

*Respondents could check more than one response.

SOURCE: Phi Delta Kappa Foundation. *Handbook for Developing Public Confidence in School*,
Bloomington, IN, 1988.

Suggested Group Activity

Given the strong evidence that families have a powerful influence on student achievement, suggest policies and programs that schools should adopt to strengthen and encourage the family role in enhancing student academic achievement.

IV. WHAT THE RESEARCH IS SAYING

A U. S. Department of Education research publication, *Strong Families, Strong Schools* (1994), points out that, in our "rapidly changing society, few areas are as essential to a successful future as education, both as a means of learning basic and advanced skills and as a process for helping to develop responsible, compassionate citizens who are ready to make valuable contributions to their family, community, state, and nation." All children are entitled to receive an education that will help them achieve in today's competitive international economy.

More than three decades of research have shown that parental participation improves student learning; more than a decade ago, *A Nation at Risk* focused public attention on the vital role families play as a child's first teacher. Yet, only in the past five or six years has this research received the attention it merits; and only recently have its findings been used to design effective programs for parent and community involvement.

As Henderson (1994) points out in *The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement*, many children are raised by adults who are not their parents, or by older siblings. For this reason, the use of the term "family" is often preferred to use of the word "parent" in discussing involvement.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

IV-1. The *Evidence Series Documenting the Importance of Families in Improving Student Achievement*

- 1981 *The Evidence Grows* reported on 35 studies that found significant, measurable benefits for children, families, and schools. The conclusion was that the form of parent involvement does not seem to be critical, so long as it is reasonably well-planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting.
- 1987 *The Evidence Continues to Grow* reported on 15 new studies in addition to those covered in the first edition. It also pointed out growth in research in new areas, such as parenting styles, high-achieving students from low-income families, relationships of families with public versus parochial schools, and successful practices of parent involvement.
- 1994 *The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement* covered 66 studies, reviews, reports, analyses, and books, 39 of which were new, and research in the areas of school or community-based programs and interventions.

SOURCE: Henderson, A. T., and Berla, N., eds. *The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement: A New Generation of Evidence*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1994.

IV-2. The Effect of Parent Training on At-Risk Students' Achievement, Attitudes, and Attendance

A 1993 study examined the relationship between parent training designed to help parents with basic parenting skills and teach them how to get involved in the education of their children, and the achievement, attendance, and attitudes of at-risk students. Using a pre/post design with a treatment and control group, the study found that:

- Students whose parents attended the workshops increased grade point averages, while students whose parents did not attend the workshops had a decrease in grade point average.
- No effect was found on school attendance.
- Parent attendance at the workshops apparently did not affect student attitudes toward school.
- Students whose parents participated in the workshops reported a significantly greater degree of parental involvement in the educational process and the school than did students whose parents did not participate.

SOURCE: McDaniel, L. "Parent Involvement Training and the Achievement, Attendance, and Attitudes of At-Risk Students," *Community Education Research Digest*, 7(2), Spring 1993.

IV-3. Parent Practices That Increase Children's Reading Achievement

A review of 30 studies identified parent practices that increased children's reading achievement:

- Children whose parents read to them 8 to 10 minutes a day had more positive attitudes and higher reading levels than children whose parents did not read to them.
- Children who asked questions and talked about a story had higher performance scores than children who did not.
- Children whose parents initiated talk about a story had significantly higher reading achievement scores than children whose parents did not.

SOURCE: Silvern, S. "Parent Involvement and Reading Achievement: A Review of Research and Implications for Practice," *Childhood Education*, 61(1), September-October 1985.

IV-4. The Relationship Between Parents' Sense of Competency and Parent Involvement

In an exploratory study that examined the relationship between parents' sense of their own competency and their involvement in education, 390 parents of children in kindergarten through fourth grade completed a questionnaire assessing their efficacy and involvement in five types of activities: help with homework, educational activities, classroom volunteering, conference participation, and telephone calls with teachers. Fifty teachers also responded to a questionnaire assessing their own efficacy, their perceptions of parent efficacy, and their estimates of parent involvement.

Results related to parents include:

- Parents' sense of competency correlated significantly with more hours of classroom volunteering, more hours spent in educational activities with children, and fewer telephone calls with the teacher.
- Parent efficacy scores were not significantly related to gender, marital status, employment status, or family income.
- Parent education level was linked to some variations in efficacy scores. Parents with a grade school education had significantly lower scores than did parents with all levels of college education; parents with a high school education scored significantly lower than parents with some college work beyond the bachelor's degree.

- More hours of classroom volunteering were reported by females, married parents, and unemployed parents.
- More hours of homework help were reported by parents with lower education and lower family income, and by single parents.
- More phone calls were reported by the lowest-income parents.

Results related to teachers include:

- Teacher efficacy and teacher perceptions of parents' efficacy were both linked positively to teacher reports of parent involvement in homework, educational activities, volunteering, and conference participation.
- Teacher efficacy was positively linked to teacher perceptions of parent efficacy.

SOURCE: Hoover-Dempsey, K.; Bassler, O.; and Brissie, J. "Explorations in Parent-School Relations," *Journal of Educational Research*, 8(5), May-June 1992.

IV-5. Patterns Related to Home-School Partnerships

Surveys and studies have identified patterns related to partnerships between home and school:

- Partnerships tend to decline unless schools and teachers work to develop and implement appropriate practices of partnership at each grade level.
- Affluent communities currently have more positive family involvement, on average, unless schools and teachers in economically distressed communities work to build positive partnerships with their students' families.
- Schools in economically distressed communities make more contacts with families about the problems and difficulties their children are having, unless they work at developing balanced partnership programs that include contacts about positive accomplishments of students.
- Single parents, parents who are employed outside the home, parents who live far from the school, and fathers are less involved at the school building, on average, unless the school organizes opportunities for families to volunteer at various times and in various places.
- Almost all families care about their children, want them to succeed, and are eager to obtain better information from schools and communities so as to remain good partners in their children's education.
- Almost all teachers and administrators would like to involve families, but many do not know how to go about building positive and productive programs and are consequently fearful of trying. This creates a situation in which educators express support for partnerships but take no action.
- Almost all students at all levels—elementary, middle, and high school—want their families to be more knowledgeable partners with schools and are willing to take active roles in assisting communications between home and school. However, students need much better information about how their schools view partnerships and about how they can conduct important exchanges with their families about school activities, homework, and school decisions.

SOURCE: Epstein, J. "School/Family/Community Partnerships, Caring for the Children We Share," *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 1995.

IV-6. Benefits of Strong Home-School Partnerships

Parents, teachers, and administrators as well as students benefit from a strong home-school partnership.

Teachers benefit through:

- Training about how to work effectively with families from diverse backgrounds.
- Support from the principal for their efforts to work with families.
- Tapping the knowledge, skills, and resources of colleagues.
- Maximizing limited resources and time through the cooperative development of grade-level homework and home learning activities.
- Better understanding of parent expectations and closer communication with parents.
- Increased rate of return on homework and greater family involvement in home-learning activities.
- Increased parental support and cooperation.

Administrators benefit through:

- Better communications between school and home.
- Fewer parent complaints about inconsistent and inappropriate homework.
- Better use of limited resources to address the critical need to link home and school.
- Improved school climate when children see parents and teachers as partners.

Parents benefit through:

- Opportunities to become partners with teachers and to shape important decisions that enhance their children's chances for success in school.
- Consistent expectations, practices, and messages about homework and home-learning activities.
- Increased opportunities to engage in home-learning activities with children.
- Access to schoolwide resources such as parent learning centers, homework hotlines, homework centers, parent workshops, and home visits.

Students benefit through:

- More positive attitudes toward school.
- Higher achievement in reading.
- Higher quality and more grade-appropriate homework.
- Completion of more homework on weekends.
- Observing more similarity between family and school.

SOURCE: Moles, O. C., and D'Angelo, D. *Building School-Family Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, OERI, September 1993.

IV-7. Other Conclusions About Parent Involvement

Research confirms that:

- Schools can, through policies and actions, reach out to parents to help them become involved in the education of their children.
- Involving parents in the education of their children has a positive effect on student achievement.

- Parent involvement is most beneficial when it is well-planned, systematic, and long-lasting, and when parents play many roles.
- While all forms of parent involvement are desirable, home-based parent involvement (doing home-learning activities coordinated with children's classwork and providing enrichment activities) appears to be the most valuable in regard to student achievement.
- Parents whose involvement is actively sought by teachers have more positive attitudes about their children's schools and teachers.
- Teacher initiative and willingness to reach out to parents are key factors for effective parent involvement.
- Parent involvement is an underutilized resource for the enhancement of student achievement.
- Socioeconomic status and lack of education have no effect on the willingness of parents to help their own children.

SOURCE: Chrispeels, J.; Fernandez, B.; and Preston, J. *Home and School Partners in Student Success, A Handbook for Principals and Staff*. San Diego, CA: San Diego City Schools, Community Relations and Integration Services Division, 1991.

IV-8. Family Interaction and Behavior Associated With High- and Low-Achieving Students

One group of studies related to parent involvement has looked at the type of family interactions and behavior associated with high-achieving students as compared to low-achieving students. Characteristics of families whose children do well in school include:

- Establishing a daily family routine—providing time and a quiet place to study, assigning responsibility for household chores, being firm about times to get up and go to bed, having dinner together.
- Monitoring out-of-school activities—setting limits on TV watching, checking on children when parents are not home, arranging for after-school activities and supervised care.
- Modeling the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work—communicating through questioning and conversation, demonstrating that achievement comes from working hard, using reference materials and the library.
- Expressing high but realistic expectations for achievement—setting goals and standards that are appropriate for children's age and maturity, recognizing and encouraging special talents, informing friends and family about successes.
- Encouraging children's development and progress in school—maintaining a warm and supportive home, showing interest in children's progress at school, helping with homework, discussing the value of a good education and possible career options, staying in touch with teachers and school staff.
- Reading, writing, and discussions among family members—listening to children read, and talking about what is being read; discussing the day over dinner; telling stories and sharing problems; writing letters, lists, and messages.
- Using community resources for family needs—enrolling in sports programs or lessons, introducing children to role models and mentors, using community services.

SOURCE: Henderson, A. T.; and Berla, N. *The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement: A New Generation of Evidence*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1994.

IV-9. Grandparent Interactions Associated with Helping Their Grandchildren Succeed in School

A recent study examined the perceptions of principals and grandparents about the importance of grandparents in helping their grandchildren succeed in school whether they were raising their grandchildren, living near them, or living far apart. The findings were:

- Grandparents and principals agree that it is important for grandparents to show that they are interested in the grandchildren's school progress.
- More than nine out of ten grandparents agree that they can help their grandchildren succeed in school by praising them when they do well.
- More than three out of four grandparents say they can help their grandchildren by discussing why discipline and a strong work ethic are important for everyone.
- More than nine out of ten principals agree that, by attending school events, grandparents show their grandchildren that their education is important to them.
- Nearly four out of five principals say it is important for grandparents to take their grandchildren to historic sites and other interesting places, such as museums, concerts, and plays.
- Nine out of ten grandparents say that by reading, learning, and trying new things *themselves*, they can help their grandchildren to be "lifelong learners."
- Four out of five grandparents and more than two-thirds of principals surveyed say it is important for grandparents to select gifts that encourage their grandchildren to learn more.
- Nearly three out of four principals say that grandparents can make a difference in their grandchildren's school success by talking with them about their future plans and discussing the role of education in those plans.
- More than eight out of ten grandparents say they can influence their grandchildren's school success by reading often and having books, magazines, newspapers and reference materials on hand when their grandchildren visit.

SOURCE: National Association of Elementary School Principals and World Book Educational Products. *The Apple of Your Eye: Helping Your Grandchildren Succeed in School*. Chicago, IL, 1995.

IV-10. Parent and Teacher Perceptions About Parental Involvement

A recent study compared the perceptions of all teachers and parents of a K-5 school's involvement initiative as well as differences in parent attitudes by family structure, employment status, and educational level. The findings and some implications were:

- Teachers have misconceptions about why parents do not take a more active role at the school. While teachers feel that parents have major obstacles in their personal lives that inhibit their participation at the school, parents say this is not true. If other responsibilities do not keep parents away, perhaps school practices do. Schools need to ask parents why they do not come to school and then change any school practices that are barriers.
- By all methods, teachers report more home-school contacts than parents. Schools need to discover the reason for this discrepancy. Assessment instruments could track the number of written and verbal communications and parents' responses. Once identified, weaknesses in the communication process could be corrected.

- Disagreement on current levels of involvement may mean that teachers and parents define involvement differently. If parents feel they are doing more to help their children than teachers perceive, they may be identifying different activities as involvement. Teachers need to ask parents to describe activities they engage in with their children. Existing activities could serve as a basis for other activities at home and school.
- Differences in responses by family characteristics suggest that schools need to modify their views of changing families. Family structure and employment status yielded few differences in perceptions compared to many differences by parents' educational levels. Yet schools continue to make different demands of parents from nontraditional and working families. Schools need to re-evaluate the basis on which they ask parents to become more involved.
- Strong correlations between parents' involvement and satisfaction with the school suggest that parents who come to school are more knowledgeable about school practices. Parent understanding of school efforts to help children may bridge the gap between home and school by providing parents with strategies to help their children outside the classroom.
- The fact that teachers and parents generally agreed on the importance of activities to involve parents and the role of the school in helping families is encouraging. The common values that teachers and parents share may serve as the basis for more frequent, meaningful interaction.

SOURCE: Wanant, C. L. "Parent and Teacher Perceptions About Parental Involvement in Schooling," *Community Education Research Digest*, 8(2), Spring 1994.

Suggested Group Activity

Imagine that your school becomes aware that the number of parents coming to school for any reason is very low. You have volunteered to serve on a task force to determine the reasons and to identify potential barriers to parental involvement. What do you expect to find? What outreach activities would you try to increase involvement?

V. A FRAMEWORK FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Teachers have many different ways of working with parents and fostering parental and community involvement. Some of these ways are deeply ingrained, based on individual personalities and past experiences, positive or negative. Some are based on assumptions about "hard-to-reach" parents.

If teachers base their definitions of "hard-to-reach" parents on past experience and personal perception, many would include such variables as minority ethnic background, low socioeconomic status, urban environment, public housing residence, and lack of education. Unfortunately, if teachers were to rely solely on the media, they might conclude that all low-income minority parents living in urban public housing complexes are not concerned about their children's education. But, as Weinberg (1995) says, "Chances are these parents want very much to be a part of their child's education, but feel they cannot."

Similarly, Herndon (1995), president of the National Head Start Association, says about the image of Head Start families, "Let's continue to fight this mythological image of the welfare queens who don't want to work or take care of their children. The poor people in this country want a break. They want an opportunity." He notes that, contrary to the stereotype of Head Start families being poor and on welfare, the truth is that two-thirds of people on welfare are working and 38 percent receive no cash assistance at all.

Teachers need to understand that there are many self-sufficient "hard-to-reach" parents who are motivated to be involved in their children's education. According to White (1995), the real possibility is that these parents would not be so hard to reach if a more optimistic attitude were evident in parent involvement efforts.

While most teachers say they try to involve parents, the reality is that some teachers dread the prospect of more parental involvement and actually adopt a defensive stance that does little to welcome parents. The practice of keeping parents at a distance goes against all the evidence of what is good for student achievement and school success. Further, it is especially important to have teachers actively helping to build community support for children's learning when parents fail to give sufficient time and emotional support to their children's academic success.

A series of Phi Delta Kappa studies (1988) document the influential role of teachers in building confidence in schools. One study found that teacher attitudes ranked as the number one source of the public's *gain* and *loss* of confidence in a school. In a companion study to find out whose actions most build confidence in schools, researchers found that:

- At the school level, teachers outranked all school-related personnel, including the principal (teachers 65%; principals 63%).
- At the district level, teachers were outranked only by the superintendent and then only by a small percentage (superintendent 48%; teachers 45%).

Another study in the series into the sources of community leaders' confidence in a school found that dedicated, committed teachers and special instructional and extracurricular programs ranked equally as most important, followed by effective administrators.

The key to building effective teacher-parent-community relations is mutual respect. If teachers are to involve parents effectively and build a community atmosphere that supports learning, training programs will be needed. This unit presents a variety of involvement models.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

V-1. Four Basic Parent Involvement Models

Protective Model

The goal is to reduce conflict between parents and educators, primarily through the separation of parents' and educators' functions, and to protect the school from interference by parents.

Assumptions:

- Parents delegate to the school the responsibility of educating their children.
- Parents hold school personnel accountable for results.
- Educators accept this delegation of responsibility.

Advantage:

- Generally effective in protecting the school against parental intrusion.

Disadvantages:

- Exacerbates conflicts between home and school because there is no structure for preventive problem solving.
- Ignores the potential of home-school collaboration for improving school achievement.
- Rejects resources for enrichment and support available from families and other members of the community.

School-to-Home Transmission Model

The goal is to enlist parents in supporting the objectives of the school.

Assumptions:

- Children's achievement is improved by continuity of expectations and values between home and school.
- School personnel should identify family and community values and practices that contribute to school success.
- Parents should endorse the importance of school, reinforce school expectations, provide home conditions that nurture development and support school success, and ensure that the child meets minimum academic and social expectations.

Advantages:

- Programs based on this model have increased children's school success.
- Parents seek clear direction from the school about the social and academic skills needed for children's success and parents' role in supporting the development of those skills.
- Clear transmission of information may be welcomed by parents, particularly those who have not had access to the social mainstream and seek such access for their children.

Disadvantages:

- Programs built on this model often contain components that reflect unwillingness to consider parents as equal partners with important strengths.
- Not all parents will be able to devote sufficient time and energy to parent involvement activities, especially if they are also dealing with dangerous housing, poor health, or stringent employment requirements.
- Schools may find it difficult to draw clear boundaries between the roles of school and home.
- There is a risk of demeaning the value and importance of the family's culture in the effort to transmit the values and goals of the school.
- Differences in class or educational background may make teachers and parents feel uncomfortable or threatened; turf concerns must be addressed and negotiated.

Curriculum Enrichment Model

The goal is to expand and extend the schools' curriculum by incorporating the contributions of families.

Assumptions:

- Continuity of learning between home and school is very important in children's learning.
- The values and culture of many families are omitted from the standard school curriculum, leading to a disruption of continuity between home and school, and often to less motivation, status, and achievement of these children in school.
- Omission of family values and culture distorts the curriculum, leading to a less comprehensive understanding of events and achievements, and to the perpetuation of damaging beliefs and attitudes about immigrants and minorities.
- Parents and educators should work together to enrich curriculum objectives and content.
- Relationships between home and school are based on mutual respect, and both parents and teachers are seen as experts and resources in the process of discovery.

Advantages:

- Model incorporates parent involvement into children's learning.
- Drawing on the knowledge and expertise of parents increases the resources available to the school and provides rich opportunities for adults to learn from each other.
- The contributions of immigrant and other minorities who have not traditionally participated in schools are especially welcomed.

Disadvantages:

- Creating continuity between home and school demands a significant investment of parents' and educators' time, resources, support, and study.
- The number of different cultures represented may make curricular adaptation very complex.
- Debate still rages about what the school's mission should be in educating children with diverse backgrounds: Is there a majority culture and should it be taught to all, or should the diversity of children be reflected and valued in the curriculum?

- Differences in class or educational background may make teachers and parents feel uncomfortable or threatened; turf concerns must be addressed and negotiated.

Partnership Model

The goal is for parents and educators to work together to accomplish a common mission: for all children in school to achieve success.

Assumptions:

- Accomplishing the common mission requires re-visioning the school environment and discovering new policies, practices, structures, roles, relationships, and attitudes in order to realize the new vision.
- Accomplishing the common mission requires collaboration among parents, community representatives, and educators. Because the task is challenging, requiring many resources, none of these groups acting alone can accomplish it.

Advantage:

- A true partnership is a transforming vision of school culture based on collegiality, experimentation, mutual support, and joint problem-solving.

Disadvantages:

- Is difficult to implement.
- Requires exchanging the educator's traditional isolation for a collaborative role, and the development of new patterns of scheduling and interaction to support this role.
- Requires a leader who is both a facilitator and cheerleader, and school and district policies that support the effort.

SOURCE: Swap, S. M. *Developing Home-School Partnerships: From Concepts to Practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1993.

V-2. Basic Roles of Parents in Their Children's Education

Parents as Partners

Parents move from the role of prime educator to a situation in which they share this role with the schools. Much of the parent role at this stage relates to the legal responsibility to enroll the child in school. Parents register their children and ensure that they are properly dressed, get to school on time, and attend each day. They purchase necessary supplies and equipment and obtain required vaccinations and medical exams. Other parent responsibilities focus on various types of home-school communications. In addition, parents have certain rights, including access to school records, due process in discipline, and involvement in decisions about special education placement.

Parents as Collaborators and Problem-Solvers

Parents can encourage and reward satisfactory achievement, show interest in the child's school day, and enforce policies about bedtime, television viewing, and homework. Parents also can provide enrichment activities that reinforce school learning; these include reading to children, trips to the library and museums, and other home and community activities. Parents are also important when children are having difficulties at school; the solutions are rarely easy and may require considerable negotiation between home and school.

Parents as Audience

Parents provide the audience at the many activities designed to draw them into the school: open houses, back-to-school nights, athletic events, concerts, and plays. A major purpose of such events is to provide parents with direct, personal information about the school, and children usually feel good when they see their parents in the audience.

Parents as Supporters

As volunteers, parents can help in their own child's or in other classrooms, work in the school library, tutor special-needs children, make attendance calls, or share their expertise in enrichment programs. Parent-teacher organizations provide other opportunities for parents to become involved, as do parent education programs and parent support networks.

Parents as Advisors and Co-Decision Makers

This role is most often accomplished through parent advisory groups that work on solutions to various problems and issues facing the school. Other possibilities, which move toward real power-sharing, include electing parents to school governing boards and councils developed as part of site-based management efforts.

SOURCE: Henderson, A.; Marburger, C.; and Ooms, T. *Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide for Working with Parents*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1986.

V-3. Epstein's Types of Parent Involvement and the Role of Schools

Type 1. Basic Obligation of Families

Schools help all families establish home environments that support learning.

Examples:

- Schools provide suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level.
- Schools provide workshops, videotapes, and computerized phone messages on parenting and child-rearing issues at each grade level.
- Schools provide families with information about adolescent health and safety, supervision, nutrition, discipline, and parenting approaches.

Type 2. Basic Obligation of Schools

Schools design effective forms of communication to each parent.

Examples:

- Schools provide communications that enable families to help students select curricula and choose among special options.
- Teachers conduct conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-up as needed.
- Schools provide information to help students make the transition from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school, and to help students plan for college and jobs.
- Translators are provided for language-minority families.
- Folders of student work are sent home weekly or monthly for parent review and comments and then returned to school.

Type 3. Involvement at School

Schools recruit and organize parent help and support.

Examples:

- School volunteer program, class parents, or committee of volunteers is established for each room.
- Schools provide parent room or parent club for volunteers and resources for parents.
- Annual postcard survey is mailed to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.

Type 4. Involvement in Home Learning

Schools give parents ideas on how to help their children at home.

Examples:

- Information is provided to parents on requirements in each subject at each grade level.
- Regular homework schedules are established that require students to discuss schoolwork at home.
- Calendars are provided with daily topics for discussion by parents and students.
- Homework hotlines are provided and videotapes are made of classes for absentees.

Type 5. Involvement in Decision-Making, Governance, and Advocacy

Schools recruit and train parent leaders.

Examples:

- Participation and leadership opportunities in PTA/PTO or other parent organizations are provided, including membership on advisory councils or committees.
- Independent advocacy groups are established.

Type 6. Collaboration with Community Organizations

Schools, families, and students must establish connections with agencies, businesses, cultural groups, and community organizations.

Examples:

- Schools coordinate student access to community and support services.
- Schools draw on community resources to provide parent education in adolescent development.

SOURCE: Epstein, J. "School and Family Partnerships," *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*. New York, NY: Macmillan, 1992.

V-4. Rich's MegaSkills

MegaSkills is the framework for parent involvement advocated by the Home School Institute. Creator Dorothy Rich defines MegaSkills as those skills critical for all learning; they are long-lasting, achievement-enhancing skills that make possible the use of other skills. According to Rich, MegaSkills can be taught by the family before the child starts school and reinforced by the family once school starts. The 10 skills are:

- *Confidence*: feeling able to do it.
- *Motivation*: wanting to do it.
- *Effort*: being willing to work hard.
- *Responsibility*: doing what's right.
- *Initiative*: moving into action.
- *Perseverance*: completing what you start.
- *Caring*: showing concern for others.
- *Teamwork*: working with others.
- *Common Sense*: using good judgment.
- *Problem-Solving*: putting what you know and what you can do into action.

These MegaSkills are the basis for several training programs: MegaSkills Leader Training for Parent Involvement; MegaSkills Essentials for the Classroom; The New MegaSkills Bond; and, bringing them all together, The MegaSkills School.

SOURCE: Rich, D. *MegaSkills—How Families Can Help Children Succeed in School and Beyond*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1988.

V-5. Chrispeel's Typology of Home-School Partnership Roles

The Home-School Partnership Roles are a continuum that builds from a foundation of home and school as co-communicators to the more formal partnership role of home and school as co-advocates, advisors, and decision-makers.

Home and School as Co-Communicators

This role provides the foundation for any partnership efforts. Communications must be two-way and involve all families and school personnel.

Home and School as Co-Supporters

This role has three critical dimensions. First, parents meet the basic obligations of child-rearing. Second, the family supports the school through activities such as fund raising, volunteering, etc. Third, schools support families.

Home and School as Co-Learners and Co-Teachers

The role of co-learners implies that both parents and school staff have opportunities to learn in formal and informal ways. Acknowledging home and school as co-teachers recognizes that parents play a critical role in helping children with learning activities at home.

Home and School as Co-Advocates, Advisors, and Decision-Makers

This role includes parents and teachers as advocates, but also includes more formal involvement through school advisory or decision-making committees.

SOURCE: Chrispeels, J. *Using an Effective Schools Framework to Build Home-School Partnerships for Student Success*. Madison, WI: National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development, 1992.

Suggested Group Activity

Imagine that your school has never had a parent involvement program. Assume that a new principal who feels very strongly about the importance of parent and community involvement has appointed you to a task force to develop a plan designed to (a) increase teachers' knowledge of their importance in building and sustaining confidence in schools; and (b) gain their commitment to and active participation in creating a broad-based parent involvement program. What are your recommendations?

VI. PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING HOME-SCHOOL BARRIERS

What is a "good" parent involvement program? Why do parents feel welcomed and appreciated in some schools but threatened or unappreciated in others?

Successful parent involvement programs have common characteristics, according to the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (1990). Specifically, effective programs are:

1. *A schoolwide priority*

Programs are given adequate support, including written school-level and district policies establishing parent involvement as a legitimate and desired activity. Adequate funding ensures the program's consistency over time. The principal and other administrators provide leadership and encouragement. Staff is allocated time to coordinate activities. Space and equipment are provided, as well as food, transportation, and child care as needed for parent participation.

2. *A community-based effort*

School personnel work in partnership with parents and other community members so that all players have a strong sense of ownership. Involvement activities are planned jointly. Nothing is imposed unilaterally by the school or the community. School personnel have a good understanding of the community's history, leadership, role models, and communication channels. Activities address issues of concern to the community.

3. *Characterized by well-defined but flexible roles and responsibilities*

Training is provided to both staff and parents to help them understand the roles and responsibilities of each and to learn ways to collaborate more effectively. Mechanisms are in place to facilitate open, two-way communication among the various key players. Administrators, teachers, outreach workers, parents, other community members, and children all have some knowledge of the values and expectations of the other groups and of appropriate ways to communicate across groups. Players accept and respect diverse viewpoints. Personal outreach to all parents is intensive and ongoing. Trained staff uses a variety of media and activities to engage families and other community members in a variety of culturally appropriate involvement opportunities. All players continuously evaluate and revise activities.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

VI-1. Characteristics of Successful Parent Involvement Programs

The basic characteristics of successful parent involvement programs fall into two broad categories: those related to schools' perspectives about parents; and those related to implementation.

Perspectives about parents

- Successful programs emphasize the strengths of parents and let them know that these strengths are valued.
- Successful programs help parents identify additional things they are capable of doing.
- Parents can learn new parenting techniques. This does not imply a criticism of existing parental practices, but suggests that parents have both the ability and motivation to expand their parenting strategies and techniques.
- Parents have important perspectives on their children. Successful programs recognize that these perspectives are important and useful to teachers.
- Parent-child relationships are different from teacher-child relationships. Successful programs recognize and use these differences. Suggested activities for parents to undertake with their children at home make use of family situations in reaching goals. Teachers can consult with parents in selecting and developing home activities.
- Parents' perspectives about involvement are important. In successful parent involvement programs, the process, efforts, and activities are viewed from the perspective of the parents, rather than from those of the staff.
- Most parents really care about their children. Successful parent involvement programs hold and express a sincere belief in this truth.
- Parents have many reasons for involvement. Successful programs make the purposes for parent participation clear, and show parents how best to work with their children.

Implementation

- Goals, purposes, and activities are matched.
- Staff skills and available resources are considered. Successful programs look at the staff's development and choose to do what is reasonable and productive.
- Variations in parents' skills are recognized. Successful programs acknowledge that there are many ways for parents to be involved and that all parents need not be involved in the same ways.
- Program activities are flexible and creative and designed to be appropriate and responsive to the particular needs of the parents.
- Expectations, roles, and responsibilities are communicated. Successful parent involvement programs have clear task expectations, roles, and responsibilities, all of which are communicated to parents.
- Parents are involved in decision-making, and administrative decisions are explained. There is a strong emphasis on the communication of information.
- Problems are expected, but solutions are emphasized. Policies and procedures for dealing with problems are developed and communicated to parents. Programs focus on finding solutions to problems, rather than pointing out problems.
- Optimum rather than maximum involvement is sought, so that all involved enjoy rather than resent their involvement.

SOURCE: Becher, R. *Parent Involvement: A Review of Research and Principles of Successful Practice*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education, 1984. ED 247 032.

VI-2. Fundamentals for Building a Family-School Relationship

Because schools are different, there is no one set of practices or characteristics that define the partnership school. However, there are some fundamental principles to which schools must subscribe if their attempts at parent involvement are to succeed. These are:

- Every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful, and friendly.
- Communications with parents are frequent, clear, and two-way.
- Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in children's learning and behavior.
- Parents are encouraged, both formally and informally, to comment on school policies and, on some issues, to share in the decision making.
- The school recognizes its responsibility to forge partnerships with all families, not simply those most easily available. This includes parents who work outside the home, divorced parents without custody, and families of minority race or language.
- The principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families.
- The school encourages volunteer participation by parents and other community members.

SOURCE: Henderson, A.; Marburger, C.; and Ooms, T. "Building a Family-School Relationship," *Principal*, January 1987.

VI-3. Principles and Practices of Family Support Programs

More and more family support programs for young children and family are being created in public schools. A set of core principles and practices form the standards for assessing whether policies, procedures, and activities are family supportive (Dunst 1995; Weiss and Halpern 1988). These include:

- Recognition that all families need support.
- A focus on promoting parenting competencies rather than diagnosing dysfunction.
- Communication of child development information in a context of respect for cultural values and preferences, and building on the strengths of families to care for their children.
- A developmental approach that provides opportunities for participants to enhance their personal growth, their parenting roles, and their contributions to the program and the community.
- Commitment to promote and strengthen informal support networks among families and to help families cope with extra familial factors that impinge on parenting.

Family support practices are characterized by the following features:

- Participation is voluntary.
- Services are flexible, responsive, and individualized.
- Staff and parents relate to each other as partners and equals.
- Parents have a voice in program policies and operations.
- Parent-to-parent networking and support are encouraged.
- Parenting support comes from multiple sources, from family members, volunteers, paraprofessionals, and other community resources and services.

SOURCE: Harvard Family Research Project. *Raising Our Future: Families, Schools and Communities Joining Together*. Cambridge, MA, 1995.

VI-4. Strategies To Reduce Home-School Barriers

Strategies to reduce barriers between the school and home may be categorized into three broad areas: expand opportunities for interaction; increase collaboration, knowledge, and skills; and reduce psychological and cultural barriers. Each area suggests actions that might be taken.

Expand Opportunities for Interaction

- Accommodate the changing nature of American families by providing transportation, holding evening/weekend meetings, etc.
- Establish a parent-liaison or community-school coordinator position.
- Capitalize on parent interest in helping students at home by establishing special programs such as "Teachers Involving Parents in Schoolwork" and "Parents in Touch."
- Sponsor "See-for-Yourself Tours" and patron tours and invite all residents, including businesses, for a bus tour.
- Sponsor a "Parent University" and set up a one-day format for parents to receive information about various educational matters and topics such as "Parents as First Teachers," "Coping with Teens," etc.
- Establish a program at which students regularly perform for their parents and the community.
- Have the school serve as a community center for a wide variety of meetings, activities, adult classes, and recreational opportunities that serve residents of all ages.
- Work with PTA/PTO and other booster groups to establish opportunities to meet the principal and teachers in neighborhood homes.

Increase Collaboration, Knowledge, and Skills

- Establish comprehensive programs through interagency collaboration and full-service schools initiatives.
- Provide parent education and special training, such as "Math Matters" and "Family Math."
- Provide special programs in family literacy and job training.

Reduce Psychological and Cultural Barriers

- Bring new information to parents and educators in nonthreatening settings through seminars, informal learning sessions, and home visits.
- Implement targeted approaches and programs that combine English as a second language (ESL) and increase parental understanding of home-school collaboration.

SOURCE: Chavkin, N.F., ed. *Families and Schools in a Pluralistic Society*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

VI-5. Increasing the Involvement of Underrepresented Families

New approaches and a strong commitment are needed to involve underrepresented families. These approaches need to be guided by several principles:

- All families are invested in their children's future; some find it difficult to act on their interest through involvement in the school's traditional activities.
- There are many ways in which parents can become involved in their children's education.
- It is important to reach out to parents. If some parents are not going into the school, the school may need to go where the parents are and provide them with incentives and the support to become involved.

- Schools must be willing to experiment with new approaches to home-school interaction, to restructure in ways that address families' needs for flexible time frames, child care, and transportation. Schools may need to adopt an expanded definition of their mission and collaborate with other community service providers in providing educational services to parents whose life circumstances prevent them from being involved in their children's schooling.
- Effective outreach requires a partnership between schools and other community organizations to address the diverse educational needs of parents and children.
- Schools that engage in successful outreach to underinvolved parents will benefit from the rich cultural heritages and ethnic diversity that these underrepresented families will bring to the school.

SOURCE: Freedman, S.; Aschheim, B.; and Zerchykov, R. *Strategies for Increasing the Involvement of Underrepresented Families in Education*. Quincy, MA: Massachusetts Department of Education, 1989.

VI-6. Teacher Norms, Values, and Beliefs That Affect Parent Involvement Efforts

To build teachers' capacity for parent involvement, the currently held norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions that facilitate or hinder home-school collaboration must be examined.

Assumptions Hindering Collaboration	Assumptions Facilitating Collaboration
Parents who don't attend school events don't care about their children's school success.	Not all parents can come or feel comfortable when they do come to school; that doesn't mean they don't care.
Parents who are illiterate, non-English speaking or unemployed can't help their children.	All families have strengths and skills they can contribute to their children's school success.
Parent activists take time away from the essential duties of the principal/teacher.	Parent activists are important community leaders who can help the school improve.
Parents from different ethnic and racial groups don't understand how to help their children.	Parents from different ethnic and racial groups have alternative and important ways of supporting their children.
It is up to parents to find out what is going on at school.	Schools have a responsibility to reach out to parents.
Parent involvement is not worth the effort.	Parent involvement is an effort that pays off in improved student achievement, improved school effectiveness, and increased parent and community support for education.

SOURCE: Chrispeels, J.; Fernandez, B.; and Preston, J. *Home and School Partners in Student Success, A Handbook for Principals and Staff*. San Diego, CA: San Diego City Schools, 1991.

VI-7. Keys to Involving Parents of At-Risk Students

Parents of at-risk students are usually not involved with the schools and are often the hardest to reach. Several keys to involving parents of at-risk students are:

- *Committed, dedicated leadership.* Overcoming barriers to reaching at-risk parents does not require large amounts of money, but it does take energy, patience, and persistence.
- *Innovative, flexible approaches.* "The way we've always done it" clearly doesn't work. What is needed is willingness to try something new.
- *Attention to environment, format, and scheduling.* When, where, and how a meeting or event is held is important to the goal of making parents feel welcome.
- *Strong, personal outreach.* Schools need to reach out to parents and the community, rather than expecting parents to take the lead.
- *Child care, transportation, and meals.* For low-income parents, the absence of these basics may make participation impossible.

SOURCE: Lontos, L. B. *At-Risk Families and School: Becoming Partners*. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse of Education Management, 1993.

Suggested Group Activity

Imagine that your school serves a low socioeconomic population and that past administrators have felt it would be impossible to get parents involved. Assume you are a member of a task force that the new principal has asked to devise a plan for increasing parent involvement, especially the parents of at-risk students. What is the first step you think the task force should recommend to the principal? Why?

VII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In a school with an effective parent involvement program, the principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families and with the community at large. Every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful, and friendly, and communication with parents is frequent, clear, and two-way. Teachers recognize their responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply with those most easily available. Working parents, divorced parents without custody of their children, minority families, and families who do not speak English are specifically included. Parents are treated as collaborators in the education process and are encouraged, both formally and informally, to comment on school policies and, on some issues, to share in the decision making.

In *Strategies for Increasing the Involvement of Underrepresented Families in Education*, Freedman, Ascheim, and Zerchykov (1989) suggest that schools may have to make extraordinary efforts in order to involve all families. Schools must be willing to experiment with new approaches to home-school interaction. If some parents are not coming to school, the school may need to go to where the parents are and provide them with incentives and the support to become involved.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

VII-1. Factors Complicating Parent Involvement Efforts

In an ideal world, teachers and parents would work closely in the education of children. In reality, several factors complicate the situation.

- The interests of parents and schools sometimes diverge, requiring teachers to make difficult judgments about how best to fulfill their joint obligations to students and to parents.
- Students vary in the degree and kind of support they receive at home for their school work. The effects of culture, language, and parental education, income, and aspirations influence each learner. Teachers are alert to these effects and tailor their practice accordingly to enhance student achievement. However, when faced with conflict, the teacher must hold the interest of the student and the purpose of schooling paramount.
- The behavior and mind-set of schools and families may be adversarial. Some parents are distrustful of the school's values, and schools sometimes underestimate a family's potential to contribute to children's intellectual growth. Students get caught in the middle, their allegiance to and affection for each part challenged by the other.

SOURCE: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. *Toward High and Rigorous Standards for the Teaching Profession*. Washington, DC, 1990.

VII-2. Basic Steps in Developing an Effective Family Involvement Program

Henderson, Marburger, and Ooms suggest eight basic steps for effective family involvement programs:

- Provide at least half-time coordination for activities.

- Assess together your needs and resources.
- Develop a common understanding about the roles parents and staff will play.
- Recruit parents actively for volunteer tasks; select and assign them carefully.
- Provide training for parents and staff.
- Establish several communication channels and keep them open.
- Provide continuing support services for parent activities.
- Provide frequent opportunities for evaluation and feedback.

SOURCE: Henderson, A.; Marburger, C.; and Ooms, T. "Next Steps in Strengthening the Partnership."

In *Beyond the Bake Sale, An Educator's Guide for Working with Parents*. Washington, DC:

National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1986.

VII-3. Do's and Don'ts for Program Success

Do:

- Make facilities welcoming to families; rethink rules that may pose barriers to family participation.
- Prepare teachers and other school personnel to welcome and communicate with families.
- Involve participants at every level, from decision making to community outreach.
- Offer a range of services for participation, recognizing that certain groups will prefer certain types of involvement.
- Choose curricula carefully; adapt whenever possible to meet the specific needs of your community.
- Be sensitive to cultural backgrounds of all families.
- Keep attuned to changing family needs and preferences.
- Work collaboratively with community resources and agencies.

Don't:

- Impose unreasonable demands on parents, teachers, or staff members.
- Forget to involve custodial, secretarial, and other school support staff in training sessions.
- Impose requirements or mandates that are likely to generate opposition from families, teachers, or school personnel.
- Forget to involve fathers and extended family members, such as grandparents.
- Overload parents with too much information.
- Use one strategy to involve everyone.
- Assume that an established program cannot be improved.
- Expect results to come quickly or easily.

SOURCE: Harvard Family Research Project. *Raising Our Future: Families, Schools and Communities Joining Together*. Cambridge, MA, 1995.

VII-4. Case Studies in Development and Implementation

Case studies of parent involvement programs in four distinctly different Tennessee communities showed "surprisingly similar steps" in development and implementation.

- A needs assessment was conducted and problems were defined.
- Funding was obtained.

- A coordinator was hired to review the problems identified and immediately began to reach out to anyone who could help. Thus, the program developed from the bottom up, not the top down.
- The coordinator began to implement the strategy named in the funding proposal but was flexible and able to reevaluate problems and progress and find new strategies as needed.
- The coordinator identified and used personal motivators/rewards to involve parents (door prizes, field trips, social services, etc.).
- The coordinator built good interpersonal relationships with parents, school people and other community members, which led to developing a reputation of trustworthiness.
- Decision-making was a group process in which parents were given as much ownership as possible. Project practices were changed as needed, adapted to fit the population being served.
- This process led to a sense of empowerment among parents, who in turn passed it on to their children.
- The coordinator took any opportunity to expand the program and collaborate with other community programs.
- All staff (coordinator, principal, teachers, and aides) had positive attitudes toward people. They respected the parents of at-risk children, believed that they would respond to positive programs, and believed that they would become involved in their children's education.

SOURCE: Wikelund, K. *Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1990.

VII-5. Recommendations of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education recommends the following key steps for implementing parent involvement efforts.

- Assess parent needs and interests about ways of working with the schools.
- Set clear and measurable goals with parent and community input.
- Hire and train a parent liaison to contact parents directly and coordinate parent activities. The liaison should be bilingual as needed and sensitive to the needs of parents and the community, including the non-English speaking community.
- Inform parents, businesses, and the community about parent involvement policies and programs through newsletters, slide shows, videotapes, local newspapers, etc.
- Recognize the importance of a community's historic, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural resources in generating interest in parent participation. If there are specific problems, a parent involvement program can serve as a forum for discussion and a conduit for change.
- Use creative forms of communication between educators and parents, including parent-teacher conferences which yield individual parent-child and teacher-child plans; newsletters mailed to parents; etc.
- Mobilize parents as volunteers to assist teachers with instructional tasks, assist in the lunchroom, and help with administrative functions. Parents may also act as volunteer tutors, classroom aides, and invited speakers.

- Train educators to include techniques for surmounting barriers between parents and schools so that teachers, administrators, and parents interact as partners.
- Integrate information and assistance with other aspects of the total learning environment. Parents should have access to information about such services as health care and nutrition programs provided by schools or community agencies.
- Schedule programs and activities flexibly to reach diverse parent groups.
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of parent involvement programs and activities.

SOURCE: National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education. *Developing Family/School Partnerships: Guidelines for Schools and School Districts*. Staff Development. Washington, DC, n.d.

VII-6. Critical Roles in Family Involvement Initiatives

Two critical roles in the organization, development, and implementation of effective family involvement programs are those of the school principal and the classroom teachers.

The principal should:

- Provide educational leadership for the other key players—school personnel, students, parents and families, and other community members.
- Set a tone for the school that is positive, friendly, open, and serving all children equally.
- Overtly recognize and affirm the fundamental premises of parent involvement (that is, all children can learn; parent involvement is a valuable resource; all parents/families can have an impact; etc.).
- Take time to get to know the community or communities served by the school—the history of their interactions with the school, their values and customs, local heroes, favorite pastimes, child-reading practices, worries, and aspirations.
- Assess school and community perceptions of needs and available resources.
- Provide opportunities for staff and parents and other community members to get to know each other.
- Lead a team of staff, parents, and community members who together design and develop the school's family involvement program.
- Require and encourage staff members to make use of parent involvement as a resource.
- Provide for and facilitate staff training in parent involvement.
- Designate staff to coordinate the school's family involvement efforts.
- Facilitate the provision of parent training in parent education and other topics of interest to parents and family members.
- Establish mechanisms for open, two-way communication between the school and the community, and encourage their use.
- Provide opportunities for parents to have a voice in school management decisions.
- Communicate regularly with all other key players, actively soliciting their input, both formally and informally.
- Monitor the program and encourage the team to evaluate progress and revise program activities as necessary, using multiple indicators of program success.
- Acknowledge and reward outstanding efforts by teachers, coordinators, outreach workers, parents, community members, and children.

Classroom teachers should:

- Maintain high expectations for every child to learn and achieve.
- Examine their own assumptions about ability and interest based on behavior, nonstandard English or lack of English, physical appearance or family background, and remain alert to negative images.
- Take time to get to know the community or communities represented by the children they teach—the history of their interactions with the school, their values and customs, local heroes, favorite pastimes, child-rearing practices, worries, and aspirations.
- Treat all children and their families with respect.
- Welcome every family into the classroom and make them feel comfortable in the school.
- Establish and maintain open, two-way communication with parents and other family members.
- Provide a variety of options for parents to collaborate in the teaching of their children (including homework activities, class projects, volunteer work in the classroom, field trips, fund raising, etc.).
- Participate in staff training about parent involvement.
- Participate in school activities designed to help staff and families get to know each other.
- View cultural diversity as a resource and teach children to value it.
- Identify and use ways to validate children's experiences outside the school and incorporate them into instructional activities.
- Collaborate with other professionals and parents to address each child's learning or emotional needs.
- Regularly take stock of parent involvement activities with input from other key players, and revise them as necessary.
- Never give up on any child.

SOURCE: Wikelund, K. *Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1990.

VII-7. Teacher Concerns About Parent Involvement

Common teacher concerns that impede the implementation of parent involvement activities include:

- Uncertainty about how to involve parents and at the same time maintain the role of the expert.
- Uncertainty about how to balance concern for the group with concern for the individual child.
- Fear that parents will try to take over teaching responsibilities and not follow the teacher's instructions and school regulations.
- Concern that parents will disrupt the classroom because they don't know how to work with children.
- Fear that parents will not keep commitments and respect confidentiality.
- Worry that parent involvement takes too much planning.

SOURCE: Becher, R. *Parent Involvement: A Review of Research and Principles of Successful Practice*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education, 1984. ED 247 032.

VII-8. Building Teachers' Capacity to Work with Families

To build teachers' capacity to work with families, both preservice and inservice training efforts should focus on:

- Bridging gaps between home and school culture.
- Assuming the best intentions on the part of parents.
- Helping families with limited financial resources and support networks to meet their basic needs.
- Empowering families by providing them with encouragement, respect, and a voice in decision making.
- Providing opportunities to build "social capital" by engaging individuals in the life of the school, building trust among teachers and parents, and agreeing on mutual values and expectations for children.

SOURCE: Harvard Family Research Project. *Raising Our Future: Families, Schools and Communities Joining Together*. Cambridge, MA, 1995.

VII-9. Teachers' Needs in Parent Involvement

To help succeed in parent involvement efforts, teachers need:

- Help to realize they already have a number of the skills necessary for establishing successful programs.
- Support for their efforts, particularly when things aren't working.
- Help in identifying their own feelings about various aspects of parent involvement.
- Help in developing conflict resolution rather than conflict avoidance strategies.
- Help in seeing the parent involvement process from the perspective of parents, rather than from their own perspective.
- Help in selecting parent involvement activities in terms of the goals and purposes of the program.
- Reminders to use the same skills when reaching out to parents that they use in their personal life to make friends.

SOURCE: Becher, R. *Parent Involvement: A Review of Research and Principles of Successful Practice*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education, 1984. ED 247 032.

VII-10. Teachers' Experiences That Affect Willingness To Involve Families

Several key elements have an impact on teachers' willingness to engage in parent involvement activities:

- Teachers who use a variety of methods to involve parents believe it is possible to involve all parents regardless of their income and educational levels.
- Teachers who have had previous positive contact with the families are more likely to support and use parent involvement activities.
- Teachers have more positive attitudes toward parent involvement when principals and other colleagues support the concept.

SOURCE: Epstein, J., and Becker, J. "A Survey of Teacher Practices," *Elementary School Journal*, 83(3), 1992.

VII-11. Parent Involvement Training for School Staff

To help overcome one of the major barriers to parent involvement—the attitudes many teachers have toward parent involvement—Moles and D'Angelo suggest that school staff receive training in:

- Greeting and meeting parents and creating an inviting and nonthreatening climate.
- Not sitting together as the "school choir" at public meetings.
- Calling parents and using positively phrased language.
- Cultural, racial, and ethnic group differences.
- How to use volunteers effectively.
- Why it is painful for some families to get involved (prior negative experiences, school language, etc.).
- Seeking parent representatives for the school parent management team.
- Planning activities that do not over stress parents and teachers with too many evening meetings.

SOURCE: Moles, O., and D'Angelo, D., eds. *Building School-Family Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, OERI., 1993.

Suggested Group Activity

From your experiences as a teacher, share your successes and failures in family/parent involvement activities. Discuss what you have learned and why you want, or do not want, to be a part of parent and community involvement efforts.

VIII. BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

The rising number of community schools and the increasing number of mandates for community involvement are part of a trend that will affect teachers into the foreseeable future. Teachers may find themselves charged with community involvement without having had any input into, or knowledge of, the decision to implement such a program. Frequently they are not involved in the planning for community involvement, even though their participation is critical to the process.

Why are teachers not consistently involved, trained, and made an integral part of the whole process? One explanation may be the lack of inservice education in many school districts. If this lack is the reality, teachers will need help in selecting and implementing practices and procedures that create and sustain meaningful community involvement.

This unit focuses on practical ways to implement basic elements of parent and community involvement to enhance the learning process in the K-12 program, with special emphasis on communicating with parents and home visitations.

Communicating with parents is often not given enough attention. Effective two-way communication has many benefits for the student, parent, and teacher; and it can also prevent misunderstandings.

Making home visitations demonstrates a conscious recognition that school is not the most significant influence in the life of a student; teachers need to take parents, the community, and students' peers into account when attempting to design a curriculum, cope with behavior problems, or provide motivation. Making a home visit provides a teacher with the opportunity to develop or enhance the relationship among the student, the parent, the teacher, and the community.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

VIII-1. Ways To Encourage Two-way Communication Between Home and School

School administrators and teachers can work together in a variety of ways to encourage communication between school and home:

- Regular personal phone calls from teachers and/or administrative staff to parents, for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Twenty-four-hour answering machines, so parents can leave a message for teachers any time of the day or night.
- Twenty-four-hour recorded message service, so parents and students can call for school announcements and messages on topics of general concern.
- Dial-your-assignment recordings, so students and parents can call in at any time to check on homework assignments without having to speak directly to the teacher.
- Dial-a-teacher; selected teachers are available by phone to answer questions about homework during certain hours of weekday evenings.
- Homework hotline and
- Parenting hotline.

SOURCE: Wikelund, K. R. *Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1990.

VIII-2. The First Letter Home

Teachers should introduce themselves early in the school year. This can be done by sending a letter home with the students. Such a letter might contain the following:

- A greeting to parents.
- A list of supplies the student will need.
- An explanation of how homework and other class work will be assigned and collected.
- An itemization of any monies the student will need during the year; the teacher should be sensitive to situations in which money might not be available.
- Any forms that need to be completed and returned.
- Information about any special classes in which students might participate.
- An explanation of the grading system and how it is reported to parents.
- An open invitation to parents to call the teacher any time they feel it is necessary. Information on the best time to call should be included.

SOURCE: Meyers, E., ed. *Teacher/Parent Partnership Handbook*. New York, NY: Impact II, 1989.

VIII-3. Sample Letter to Parents about Elementary School Homework

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian,

Students who consistently complete homework—and hand it in on time—learn and reinforce essential basic skills. They increase their self-confidence and develop a positive lifetime attitude toward learning.

I want to provide some practical suggestions for helping your child at home with assignments.

- Help your child establish a regular routine for doing homework. Provide time and a place for study that includes necessary materials. The study place should have good lighting and be reasonably quiet and free from distractions.
- Help your child to recognize that homework is important to her (his) learning. Be positive. Encourage and praise your child's efforts.
- Make suggestions in a positive way, for example, "Your teacher will understand your ideas better if your writing is easy to read."
- Assist students by offering advice, but make sure they do their own work.
- If your child does not understand the assignment or a particular problem, help your child write a question he or she can ask me. Often writing a question about what is not understood will help clarify the child's thinking and may help solve the problem.
- Communicate with me when an assignment is unclear or when your child has problems with an assignment. Don't make homework a family battleground.
- Help your child obtain and complete make-up assignments when he or she is absent. Call the school and ask for assignments.
- Help with assignments by checking for completion, neatness, and accuracy.

Thank you for your help! I hope you will give me ideas about how I can make homework expectations clearer and more consistent.

Sincerely,

[Teacher's signature]

SOURCE: Chrispeels, J.; Boruta, M.; and Daugherty, M. *Communicating with Parents*. San Diego, CA: San Diego County Office of Education, 1988.

VIII-4. Gaining Insights From Parents

Following are sample questions that might be put in the form of a brief questionnaire a teacher can send to parents to get to know a child better. These questions might be used at the beginning of the school year or during a parent-teacher conference session. They could also be discussed over the phone.

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian,

I need your help to get to know your child better. The following is a list of questions I would suggest as a discussion guide for our upcoming conference [or other meeting]. Sharing this information with me will help me better understand and teach your child. Any information you share will remain strictly confidential.

Academic progress

1. What does your child tell you about his or her progress in school?
2. In what ways is your child working up to your expectations?
3. In what ways is your child not meeting your expectations?
4. What does your child like most about school?
5. In which one area would you most like your child to improve this year?
6. In your child's opinion, what would make life at school more interesting or enjoyable?
7. What aspect of school work does your child consider most difficult?
8. What things at school tend to upset your child?

Homework and home-learning activities

9. How do you feel about the homework your child is expected to do?
10. How does your child react if you help with homework?
11. How often do you and your child read together?
12. What television programs do you and your child watch together?
13. What activities do you and your child especially enjoy doing together?
14. How does your child act if you correct a mistake or suggest an area to work on?

Home life and behavior

15. What types of activities take up your child's leisure time?
16. What kinds of chores does your child have at home?
17. How does your child handle the chores you assign?
18. What does your child do when upset or angry?
19. What observations can you share about your child's relationship with peers?
20. How do you encourage good behavior at home?
21. How much sleep does your child usually get each night?
22. Are there any health, medical, or family concerns that might affect your child's performance in school?

[Teacher's Signature]

SOURCE: Chrispeels, J.; Boruta, M.; and Daugherty, M. *Communicating with Parents*. San Diego, CA: San Diego County Office of Education, 1988. (Adapted from Strom, R.D. and Bernard, H.W. *Educational Psychology*. Monterey, CA: Brook-Cole Publishers, 1982.)

VIII-5. Invitation to Parent-Teacher Conference

Date _____

Dear [Parent(s') or Guardian's Name]

You are invited to attend a parent-teacher conference, so that you may observe and discuss the progress your child is making in school and have a chance to ask questions about the school's program.

If you approve, your conference has been scheduled as follows:

(Give day of week, actual date, time, school, and room.)

If you cannot come at the above date and time, please suggest another date and time. I would like to meet all of my students' parents or guardians at least once during [month].

This personal conference will help me better understand your child, so that I can meet his (her) needs more effectively.

I am looking forward to meeting with you.

[Teacher's signature]

Tear Off and Return Lower Portion

[Name(s)] _____

____ Will attend the conference at _____ o'clock on _____

____ Cannot attend the conference on the date specified. Two possible other times are:

Day of week _____ Date _____ Time _____

Day of week _____ Date _____ Time _____

We are especially interested in discussing the following:

_____(Student's name) (Parent's/guardian's signature) _____

Telephone _____

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

VIII-6. Training Needs for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers need training and practice in conducting parent conferences, including the physical setting and the format of the conference.

- Physical barriers, such as a desk or table between teacher and parent, should be removed.
- A grade book should not be the focus of the conference.
- Student work should be displayed around the room.
- Teachers should not do all the talking but should be prepared to ask questions about the student's behavior, interests, and activities at home. Parents should be given equal time to ask questions about homework, exams, reports, grading periods, and school routines.
- Parents should be encouraged to talk about what their child has to say about school, and whether the parents have a good idea about what is going on in school.

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

VIII-7. Helpful Hints for Successful Conferences

- Make parents feel comfortable, welcomed, and at home in your space. Get up and greet them with a handshake and a smile.
- Thank parents for taking time to attend the meeting, mention your awareness of any problems they may have had, such as bad weather, heavy traffic, today's busy schedule, baby sitting, etc.
- Dress up. Let the parents know that you think they are important. Convey the feeling that you are proud to be their child's teacher, that you are proud to be a teacher, and that you are a professional.
- Have on hand as much information as possible regarding the student's performance, test results, papers, drawings, personal comments, reactions, and attitudes. In short, show you have a thorough knowledge of that child.
- Find something complimentary to say about some aspect of the student's work, character, or personality. Slowly lead into the areas where improvement is needed. Tactfully, but firmly, stress the need for focusing on these deficiencies.
- Elicit suggestions from parents about how they can assist in the process of improving their child's performance, grades, attendance, or attitude. Discuss how they can become part of the solution and become involved. Enlist parents' assistance as much as possible.
- Provide parents with a schedule of tests, papers, and finals so they are aware of the dates. This schedule will facilitate their involvement and show them that you think guidance is needed both in school and at home.
- Most of all, listen, especially between the lines.

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

VIII-8. Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere

The physical appearance of a school building does a lot to encourage or discourage parent involvement. A physical structure that is forbidding sends the message "keep out." A home-like environment lets people know they are welcome. Some things schools can do to create this type of environment include:

- Display signs that *welcome* visitors and remove warning signs if possible. (If English is a second language for many parents, add welcome signs that reflect the languages of families' countries of origin.)
- Post a map that explains where to find the office.
- Arrange flowers, brightly colored murals, children's pictures, other displays, or photographs in an entrance hallway.
- Designate space for a parent center and have coffee, tea, or cold drinks available.
- Have a parent volunteer greet other parents at the entrance of the school at drop-off and pick-up times during the first week of school.
- Explain to secretaries, custodians, and other support staff their importance in encouraging family involvement. Brainstorm a strategies for welcoming and supporting parents.
- Arrange for translators for parents who do not speak English.

SOURCE: Swap, S. *Developing Home-School Partnerships, From Concepts to Practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1993.

VIII-9. Little Things Mean a Lot in Establishing a Positive Relationship

A short list of parent involvement tips for teachers:

- Create a comfortable space in your room.
- Express appreciation for the family member's being there.
- Have something to show.
- Identify/discuss positive aspects of child.
- Offer information on how you help children learn.
- Suggest concrete ways family member can help.
- Discuss and develop common goals for student achievement.
- Provide information on other educational resources in the community.

SOURCE: Safran, D. "Little Things Mean a Lot," *Apple Pie*. IX(3) Fall 1995.

VIII-10. Family Resource Centers

Programs of family resource centers have in common a pattern of services that balances the importance of adult education and support with learning environments for children. They offer neighborhood center-based services such as drop-in times and parent-child classes and make a considerable effort to seek out and design programming for disadvantaged families. Most make a special effort to nurture the nontraditional household:

- Dual-career families.
- Parents requiring literacy training and GED preparation.
- Incarcerated or abused parents.
- Family caregivers.
- Single-parents.
- Racially-isolated families.
- Educationally deprived families.

SOURCE: Harvard Family Research Project. *Raising Our Future: Families, Schools and Communities Joining Together*. Cambridge, MA, 1995.

VIII-11. Parent Education Centers

Some schools have established Parent Education Centers that offer parents a wealth of resources in a friendly, welcoming environment. Teachers may want to enlist the help of the center to address a wide range of parental needs and concerns. Some of the more common types of support are:

- Activities that enhance parenting skills, including workshops, seminars, discussions, and support groups.
- Activities that support parents' own educational needs and interests, ranging from ESL, GED preparation, and high school completion to leisure time and recreational pursuits.
- Seminars for parents and teachers together.
- Outreach to parents in their homes through a home visitor or similar program.
- Use of technology to provide family support including videos of teachers explaining homework assignments, homework hotlines, etc.
- Activities recognizing and celebrating the contributions of parents/families.

SOURCE: Swap, S. *Developing Home-School Partnerships, From Concepts to Practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1993.

VIII-12. Gaining Insights From Students About Their Lives Outside of School

Following are activities teachers can use to learn about their students' lives outside of school:

- Have a group discussion about "a day in the life of...."
- Brainstorm with your students a list of questions to ask someone about their daily life.
- Have students write their own questions, then work in pairs interviewing each other.
- Have your students keep a diary or journal about their daily activities.
- Have students give oral reports about a day in their lives.
- Have your students describe in detail the block they live on and make maps of it.
- Have them copy signs in their neighborhood.
- Have them bring things from home that they know how to read or written items for which they understand the use.
- Have students compile a notebook of written materials used in their daily lives.
- Discuss each child's notebook with the class to elicit other students' knowledge about the items.
- Send home a brief parent survey about the students' personal interests or hobbies, likes and dislikes. Be sure to include a question about "why my kid is great" and one about anything the parent/caregiver thinks the child might work on. Include a section about the parents' own interests and expertise.
- Brainstorm with your students a list of their special interests and those of family members.
- Have students bring in any materials they have at home about their interests or hobbies.
- Once you have identified special interests, bring in books, magazines, and newspaper articles about them for individual children to take home and read with other members of their families.
- Alert the school librarian about your students' special interests.
- Build other activities around these interests—oral reports, interviews, class discussions, field trips, videotapes, art projects, etc.

SOURCE: Wikelund, K. R. *Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1990.

VIII-13. Tips To Remember When Making Home Phone Calls

- Ask for the parent/guardian/caretaker by full name.
- Introduce yourself and explain your purpose in calling (for example, to share with them some information that can help their child).
- Open the conversation by briefly saying something about your own family, your background in the community, your connection to the school, etc.
- Be positive. The way you communicate your attitude will form a lasting impression.
- Convey a genuine interest in the person you're calling. Express interest in the future of the child.
- Be persistent, in a friendly way. Don't give up until the person clearly states that he or she is not interested in your call.
- Finally, stop calling when you get tired. It's hard to sound friendly when you're tired.

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

VIII-14. Helpful Tips for Telephoning Parents

The tips for telephoning parent(s) or guardian fall into two categories: good news and problems.

Tips for the introductory or good news calls:

- Make notes ahead of time about what you want to say.
- Make sure you know family status before calling; parent's (guardian's) name may be different from child's.
- Introduce and identify yourself.
- Ask if this is a good time to talk.
- Start with something positive.
- Use plain English with no jargon.
- Keep conversation short, simple, and to the point.
- Use active listening skills; try to get parent involved in the conversation.
- End by encouraging the parent to call if he or she has concerns.

Tips for calls dealing with a problem:

- Choose your words carefully; make notes ahead of time; avoid jargon.
- Start off with something pleasant but then get to the point.
- Don't try to place blame.
- Avoid labels.
- Call as soon as possible after the problem comes up.
- Report objective information; be as specific as possible.
- Ask if parents have noticed any problems at home.
- Talk about the problem as a shared one.
- Actively listen for both facts and feelings.
- Make positive suggestions about what might be done; try to find solutions.
- Close conversation on a pleasant note if at all possible.
- Make a note about when you called and what was discussed; put it in the student's file.

SOURCE: McAfee, O. *Improving School-Home Communications, A Resource Notebook for Staff Developers*. Charleston, West Virginia: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 1984.

VIII-15. Listening with Three Ears

Communication involves listening as well as speaking. A good teacher uses three ears:

- With one ear, listen to what people are saying. (This is relatively easy.)
- With a second ear, listen to what people are not saying. (This is more difficult.)
- With the third ear, listen to what people want to say but don't know how to. (This is the most difficult.)

SOURCE: Adapted from Mecum, M., and Mecum, T. "Seeking, Succeeding—Listening," *Sky Magazine*, October 1985; provided by Ed Brown, Georgia Southern University, September 1993.

VIII-16. Listening: Some Observations

- Listening is not the same as hearing.
- Successful oral communication depends as much on the listener as the speaker.

- Concentration in listening is difficult because of the speed differential between thinking and speaking.
- It has been said that people are the only creatures who can *talk* themselves into trouble. (Does that mean we can *listen* our way out?)
- What the listener thinks is being said is as important as what is actually said.
- Arthur Combs said, "A fact is not what is; a fact for any person is what he or she believes is so."
- J. C. Penney said, "The occupational disease of the poor leader is in his/her inability to listen."

SOURCE: Ed Brown, Georgia Southern University, September 1993.

Suggested Group Activity

- A) Send four to five members of the group out of the room so they cannot hear what is being said. Have the remainder of the group make up a short message that contains a sense of urgency, a number or a statistic, and several specific actions to be taken. For example:

There is a small fire in the chem lab. Please go to the main office and call 911 for the fire department and sound the fire alarm. Then get a wheelchair and take it to room B-17, the special education classroom.

Call one person back into the room and have someone communicate the message. Then ask the person who received the message to call another person back into the room and repeat the message. Continue until the last person has been called back into the room, received the message, and repeated it to the rest of the group. Have the group discuss any changes in the original message, and when and how they occurred.

- B) Divide into four groups. Have one group develop a skit on good procedures for *setting up* a parent-teacher conference and another group develop one on *conducting* a successful parent-teacher conference. Have the other two groups develop skits on what *not* to do.

VIII-17. Home Visits Can Serve a Variety of Goals

Home visits may be conducted by teachers, community aides, or trained volunteers. Such visits can be used to:

- Welcome new families to the school community.
- Survey parents for their views on school policies and programs.
- Report on student progress in school.
- Solve specific problems.
- Demonstrate home learning activities to parents.

SOURCE: Chrispeels, J.; Boruta, M.; and Daugherty, M. *Communicating with Parents*. San Diego, CA: San Diego County Office of Education, 1988.

VIII-18. Preparing for a Home Visit

- Get information from teachers about the student's classroom performance, daily classroom routines, discipline, and homework. Make notes and be sure you understand the specifics for each child. Try to find out about any events that may be affecting families.

- Contact parent(s) or guardian, establish rapport, and explain that you want to share information about:
 - how the child spends time in school and what happens in a typical day in the child's classroom;
 - what's happening at the school in general; and
 - ideas for helping the child at home.
- Be sure to let parent(s) or guardian know that you feel your communication about these things will help the child do better in school.
- Set up an appointment time when parent(s) or guardian can talk for about 45 minutes, uninterrupted. Be clear about whether an interpreter is needed.

SOURCE: Chrispeels, J.; Boruta, M.; and Daugherty, M. *Communicating with Parents*. San Diego, CA: San Diego County Office of Education, 1988.

VIII-19. How to Conduct a Home Visit

- Establish rapport.
- Go over dates and purposes for upcoming school events.
- Describe the child's daily routine in the classroom.
- Go over the discipline policy for the classroom.
- Go over the homework policy.
- Discuss ways to help with homework (provide family-friendly homework ideas).
- Ask the parent(s) or guardian if any learning problems have been observed at home or if they have any specific concerns.
- Discuss how the parent(s) or guardian can help solve these problems.
- End the visit.
- Evaluate yourself after each session.
- Send a follow-up note or call to reinforce the purpose of your visit.

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

VIII-20. A List of Do's and Don'ts for Home Visits

- Converse—don't interrogate. Remember you are in the home of the parent for the purpose of establishing a relationship as well as to gather information.
- When in the home, be honest about your feelings but never complain about school policies, administrators, fellow teachers, students, or other parents. Such comments may cause the parent to be concerned about how you will discuss him or her with others.
- Don't be preoccupied with your own professionalism or allow yourself to be perceived as cold or aloof. You are human. Allow your humanity to show.
- If children are present in the home, greet them. If you don't know their names, learn them and use them.
- If the parent(s) or guardian recommends that you use first names, take advantage of this opportunity to establish informality.
- If it is necessary to take notes, do so in a way that does not alarm the parent(s) or guardian. Be certain that they know what you are writing. One way to do this is to read it back to them as if to ask that they check it for accuracy.

- In some situations, it may be desirable to record certain agreements. In such cases let the parents have a copy immediately; encourage them to write it themselves. If you make referrals, write those as well.
- When you enter the house, you will probably be asked to sit down. Do so and try to look comfortable and relaxed. Don't sit on the edge of the chair as if you are ready to spring out the door.
- Don't watch the clock. If the appointment is scheduled for a certain length of time, it is all right for you to look at your watch.
- If the parent(s) or guardian cannot give you their complete attention, attempt to fit into the activities that are preoccupying them. If, for example, you notice that it is necessary for one of the parents to continually run to the kitchen to check the oven, suggest that you move to the kitchen.
- If your host offers you something to eat or a cup of coffee, accept it. Eating together is a social custom long associated with communication.
- Although you are there to observe the household as well as to communicate with the parents, don't allow yourself to scrutinize every detail of the house and its workings.
- When the parents or others in the house are talking, either to you or to someone else, listen actively. Do not be so preoccupied with your agenda that you fail to respond to theirs.
- Break the ice. It may be difficult for the parents to relax with you. Therefore, you must attempt to create a comfortable situation by conversing on subjects that are not threatening. Commenting on the house or the weather is sometimes necessary. After you believe the situation is relaxed enough, gradually get to the business at hand.
- Before the visit has concluded, be certain you have made at least one positive comment about the household, the children, some article of furniture, etc.
- Dress in a comfortable way. Remember that the more formally you are dressed, the more formal you will appear. (This is not to suggest that you should wear recreational clothing.)
- If you are visiting a home in which the parent(s) or guardian are poor, avoid any ostentatious display of your relatively high economic status.
- If the parent(s) or guardian you are visiting normally converse in a language different from yours, bring someone with you who can translate.
- At the end of the meeting, summarize any agreements that were made and verify relevant timetables. Go over your list of objectives for the meeting to be certain that you forgot nothing.

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

Suggested Group Activity

Select members of your group to role play a home visit of a teacher to:

- A single parent, low-income mother of two preschoolers in addition to your student who has a behavior problem in school.
- A middle-class family with one child (your student), who both work; the student has a behavior problem in school.

Compare the approaches—differences and similarities—in the two visits.

IX. SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

For the individual teacher, using volunteers in the classroom is one of the most rewarding areas of community involvement. Volunteers can relieve the teacher of many tasks that do not require professional attention and provide additional reinforcement to classroom instruction. Using community resources in and out of the classroom is a way to give what goes on in the classroom a closer relationship with actual life situations, needs, and problems. The community can be used as a laboratory and as a supplement to classroom teaching.

In addition to assisting the teacher, volunteers often have skills and expertise the teacher does not have. A wise teacher will find ways to tap those skills to help the children.

Using volunteers requires commitment by both teachers and volunteers. But a successful comprehensive school volunteer program requires more than commitment. It requires careful attention to the details of securing support; developing goals and a management plan; outlining roles and responsibilities; recruiting volunteers; training teachers, staff, and volunteers; supervising and evaluating the program on an ongoing basis; and publicly recognizing the value of volunteer contributions.

The trend today is to employ a professional to coordinate the various elements necessary for successful experiences for teachers and volunteers. The volunteer coordinator is a liaison between administrators, teachers, and volunteers. The coordinator relieves teachers of some of the responsibilities involved in the operation of the program, such as communicating school policies to volunteers, ensuring that the program adheres to these policies, and maintaining regular contact with volunteers. The coordinator's role includes processing requests from teachers, as well as recruitment, continuing assessment and evaluation, record keeping, public relations, motivation, training, and recognition.

Sometimes, individual teachers develop their own volunteer programs. This may turn out to be the first step in the development of a school-wide program.

TOPICAL OUTLINES

The following are topical outlines and instructional units that can be used by trainers in a variety of settings, or by educators in group discussions or inservice sessions.

IX-1. Potential Concerns about Volunteers in the Classroom

Sometimes, in the initial stages of a volunteer program, teachers are reluctant to open their classrooms to "outsiders," and parents and community members may be reluctant to volunteer.

Teachers may fear that a parent or community volunteer will:

- Recognize problem children at school and may add to their problems by making the community aware of their school behavior.
- Compare professional and personal qualities of staff members.
- Take up too much time.
- Create confusion in the instructional program.
- Criticize teachers.
- Increase already overwhelming responsibilities.

- Share confidential information acquired at school.
- Try to take over teaching responsibilities.
- Fail to keep commitments, creating scheduling difficulties.
- Fail to follow instructions or school regulations.
- Be unable to work productively with children.
- Use non-standard English or exhibit other characteristics or behavior the teacher does not want to introduce into the classroom.

Teachers may also fear:

- They will not be able to establish a working relationship with parents.
- They will not be able to teach when there are other adults in the classroom.
- They will be unable to get along with all the parents.
- The use of parents in instructional activities may lower educational standards.
- The school system will hire fewer certified teachers than are really needed because of volunteers.

Parents and community members may be reluctant to volunteer because they:

- Fear or resent the teacher because they had unhappy personal experiences in school.
- Feel that the teacher blames parents for children's failure in school.
- Believe that the teacher doesn't know how to handle their child.
- Feel that the school does not spend enough time teaching basic skills (the "Three R's").
- Think that the school does not operate efficiently and that taxpayers' money is being wasted.
- Feel that the school lacks discipline.
- Believe that they cannot do anything worthwhile with the children.
- Think that it is the job of the school to educate the child and to provide for his or her well-being during school hours.
- Disapprove of changes in the present school system.
- Fear they will disrupt the instructional program.
- Have younger children who are not in school; lack transportation; are too busy in the home; are employed during school hours.

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

IX-2. Basic Guidelines for Choosing and Using Volunteers

A volunteer should:

- Like children and relate well to them.
- Be able to work under the direction of school professionals.
- Be interested in education and the community.
- Be committed to the goals of the parent volunteer program.
- Want to help.
- Be dependable and in good health.
- Be willing to attend occasional inservice training sessions.
- Respect school policies.

- Give children appropriate encouragement.
- Remember that discipline is the teacher's responsibility.
- Follow education's code of ethics.
- Avoid evaluating children.
- Get to know the children.
- Give deserved praise.
- Provide motivation through individual attention.
- Be consistent and objective.
- Be honest with children.
- Respect the children's privacy.
- Be a good listener.
- Share ideas with the teacher.
- Be thoroughly prepared.
- Maintain a sense of humor.
- Keep calm.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Keep commitments.

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

IX-3. Do's and Don'ts for Using Volunteers

Do:

- Invite volunteers to serve as partners in your school.
- Clearly define for staff members and volunteers the differences in their tasks and roles.
- Encourage your staff to help decide which tasks volunteers should perform.
- Give volunteers tasks that complement the services of paid professional staff members.
- Assign one staff member responsibility for administering the volunteer program.
- Provide an orientation program to acquaint volunteers with the school's functions, goals, and methods, as well as the nature of their tasks.
- Provide an ongoing, regularly scheduled training program.
- Request a specific commitment of time and/or resources from volunteers.
- Make assignments based upon skills, knowledge, interests, availability, and resources.
- Express appreciation. Volunteers need recognition as much as paid staff members.

Don't:

- Regard volunteers as an appendage to your program, perhaps only to be tolerated.
- Leave role definition vague. Staff members and volunteers must be clear about who has responsibility in which area.
- Leave task identification entirely up to administrative personnel or the volunteers themselves.
- Use volunteers as a substitute for paid staff members.
- Spread responsibility for administration of volunteer services among several staff members, especially at the beginning of the program.
- Put volunteers to work before they know how to perform their tasks, or allow them to learn through trial and error.

- Be vague about what is expected of volunteers in terms of time and resources.
- Overuse, underuse, or misuse volunteers.
- Allow volunteers to function entirely on their own or in isolation from other volunteers and staff members.
- Ignore the need for encouragement and expressions of appreciation.

SOURCE: Decker, L. E., and Decker, V. A. *Home/School/Community Involvement*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1988.

IX-4. Responsibilities and Rights of a School Volunteer

A volunteer has a responsibility to:

- Accept the assignment with only as much responsibility as he/she can handle.
- Respect confidences of students and school personnel.
- Follow guidelines and policies established by the school.
- Decline work that is not acceptable; keep biases and prejudices from interfering with job performance.
- Use time wisely and not interfere with the performance of others.
- Use reasonable judgment when there is no known policy; consult with supervisor for future guidance as soon as possible.
- Provide feedback, suggestions, and recommendations to supervisors.
- Be considerate, respect others, and work as a team member with staff, other aides, and students.
- Realize that he/she does not have primary instructional, evaluation, decision-making or teaching responsibilities, but is expected to enrich and extend learning opportunities and promote educational excellence.
- Fulfill commitment or give early notice so a substitute can be found.

A volunteer has a right to:

- Be assigned a worthwhile and challenging job, with freedom to use existing or new skills.
- Be trusted with any confidential information necessary to carry out an assignment.
- Receive training and supervision.
- Know whether his/her work is effective and how it can be improved.
- Expect that time will not be wasted by supervisor's lack of planning and cooperation.
- Be kept informed about school events, calendar, and holidays.
- Expect serious recommendations and encouragement from supervisor in order to develop additional skills or move to new assignment if desired.
- Receive appropriate recognition, including day-to-day expressions of appreciation.
- Have an opportunity to be part of the educational team.

SOURCE: Taranto, S. *Coordinating Your School Volunteer Program*. Palo Alto, CA: VORT Corporation, 1983.

IX-5. Common Mistakes in Recruiting Volunteers

- Recruiting before needed job skills are known.
- Using a scattershot effort not designed to attract the specific kinds of volunteers and skills required.
- Failing to take the time to interview and make meaningful task assignments that take advantage of volunteers' skills and interests.

SOURCE: Stehle, V. "Finding New Ways to Recruit and Keep Today's Volunteers," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 29, 1993.

IX-6. Avoiding Problems in Recruiting Volunteers

- Do an overall manpower needs assessment to determine what can and cannot be assigned to volunteers.
- Write job descriptions for volunteers.
- Go after volunteers with specific skills.
- Offer flexible hours.
- Seek advice and assistance from special state- and university-sponsored volunteer offices.
- Whenever possible, use personal contacts to attract volunteers. Get staff members and other volunteers to enlist friends, family members, and colleagues.
- Tailor publicity to appeal to members of particular racial or ethnic groups.
- Be cautious about using newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio to recruit volunteers; conduct a careful check of respondents' backgrounds for possible criminal or child abuse records.
- Make the appeal upbeat, not a desperate plea for help.
- Stress ways that volunteers will benefit from working with the organization.
- Offer short-term opportunities.
- When necessary train volunteers for the jobs they are to do.
- Eliminate barriers that make people reluctant to volunteer—take the uncertainty out of volunteering. Ask for responsible participation but be flexible, because people's schedules do change.

SOURCE: Stehle, V. "Finding New Ways to Recruit and Keep Today's Volunteers," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 29, 1993.

IX-7. Seventy-Six Ways Volunteers Can Help at the Elementary School

These suggestions are just a beginning. You will think of other ways.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Tell stories to children. | 13. Play instructional games. |
| 2. Listen to children read. | 14. Play games at recess. |
| 3. Conduct flash card drills. | 15. Assist with visual tests. |
| 4. Provide individual help. | 16. Prepare visual materials. |
| 5. Assist in learning centers. | 17. Develop program materials. |
| 6. Set up learning centers. | 18. Grade papers. |
| 7. Help contact parents. | 19. Prepare bulletin boards. |
| 8. Reproduce materials. | 20. Help with book fairs. |
| 9. Work in clinic or library. | 21. Work with underachievers and the gifted. |
| 10. Check out audio-visual equipment. | 22. Reinforce spelling or vocabulary words. |
| 11. Practice vocabulary with non-English speaking students. | 23. Help select library books. |
| 12. Make instructional games. | 24. Assist with field trips. |
| | 25. Make props for plays. |

26. Set up or run bookstore or book exchange.
27. Gather resource materials.
28. Help children learn to type.
29. Help children with arts and crafts.
30. Help with cooking projects.
31. Check out books from public library.
32. Set up experiments.
33. Take attendance.
34. Collect lunch money.
35. Escort children to designated areas.
36. Work on perceptual activities.
37. Make list of library resources.
38. Visit a sick child at home.
39. Work with a handicapped child.
40. Prepare teaching materials.
41. Record grades.
42. Supervise groups taking tests.
43. Discuss careers or hobbies.
44. Show a video to a group.
45. Help young children with walking on a balance beam, jumping rope, etc.
46. Reinforce learning of the alphabet.
47. Reinforce recognition of numerals.
48. Drill recognition of color words.
49. Talk to children; be a friend.
50. Help children with motor skill problems.
51. Help children learn a foreign language.
52. Play a musical instrument.
53. Help students who play instruments.
54. Make puppets.
55. Dramatize a story.
56. Help with handwriting practice.
57. Set up a "store" to practice math skills.
58. Make reading carrels from boxes.
59. Drill spelling words.
60. Tell stories with puppets or flannel board.
61. Assist with singalongs, crafts, or games.
62. Show slides or videos of life in other countries or other parts of the U. S.
63. Discuss care and training of pets.
64. Demonstrate different artistic abilities.
65. Discuss life from the perspective of a handicapped person.
66. Discuss different handicaps.
67. Discuss attitudes, feelings, and emotions.
68. Share ethnic backgrounds and experiences.
69. Discuss farm life and farm animals.
70. Demonstrate gardening skills and other hobbies or abilities.
71. Help prepare assembly programs.
72. Discuss holidays and special occasions.
73. Discuss specific aspects of safety.
74. Share information about local history.
75. Demonstrate various pioneer crafts.
76. Assist in preparing courses in photography, creative dramatics, knitting, various types of dance, etc.

SOURCE: Little Rock [Arkansas] Volunteers in Public Schools. *School/Community Partnership Program* (n.d.).

IX-8. Twenty-Five Ways Working People Can Help at School

Many parents are unable to volunteer during regular school hours. Here are some ideas for getting involved at other times.

1. Saturday work parties to beautify the school yard, build playground structures, plant shrubs or trees, paint murals, etc.
2. Saturday field trips.
3. Serve as resource volunteer explaining various kinds of jobs (police officer, firefighter, baker, truck driver, etc.) or other areas of specialized knowledge.
4. Work on a school newsletter gathering news, editing, typing, etc.
5. Help with weekend fund-raising projects: car washes, bake sales, bazaars, carnivals, barbecues, flea markets, garage sales, etc.
6. Play with youngsters in the school yard during your lunch hour.
7. Make educational games at home or in "make and take" sessions—game boards, drill cards, and other learning materials.
8. Collect materials of any type for art projects: wallpaper, scrap paper, wood, old crayons, cloth, etc.
9. Post a school volunteer recruitment poster in shop or business.

10. Contact people who can assist the school program in various ways.
11. Request release time from employer to assist at school.
12. Take pupils on a one-time tour of your shop or business during school hours or on the weekend.
13. Write down ideas for art projects or enrichment programs and share them with a school supervisor.
14. Attend PTA and other group meetings.
15. Help with a potluck dinner.
16. Type newsletters, general school notes, proposals, classroom assessment projects, etc.
17. Show slides or pictures from trips/vacations.
18. Repair toys and classroom materials.
19. Sew costumes or puppets for plays, pillows for rest time, etc.
20. Do woodwork at home. Build room dividers, learning centers, or electric boards out of scrap wood and cardboard.
21. Ask friends, relatives, or other community members to volunteer.
22. Tutor a child in an after-school/night-time tutorial center.
23. Make attendance calls.
24. Offer to occasionally take care of children, so parents can participate in a special school project or event.
25. Ask a principal, teacher, or volunteer office how you can help after school or on weekends.

SOURCE: Little Rock [Arkansas] Volunteers in Public Schools. *School/Community Partnership Program*. (n.d.).

IX-9. Request for Volunteer Assistance

Teacher _____ Date _____

Subject _____ Room _____

I would like a volunteer to help with the following teaching tasks:

I would like a volunteer to help with the following clerical tasks:

I would like the volunteer to come on: (days and times)

I would like a community resource person to present or demonstrate in the following areas:

Comments: _____

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

IX-10. Teacher Evaluation of the Volunteer Program

1. List the ways you have had classroom volunteers help you.

2. How often do classroom volunteers help you? _____
3. Do you feel that the volunteers have been adequately trained to do the kinds of things you want them to do? YES NO
4. In what areas do they need more preparation? _____

5. Do you find you must spend more than 15 minutes planning for or explaining an activity to a volunteer? YES NO
6. If you answered "yes" to number five, do you mind spending this extra time?
 YES NO
7. Have you ever had to re-do a classroom volunteer's work? YES NO
8. Do you find that classroom volunteer assistance gives you more time to plan or to work with children? YES NO
9. Is there any evidence of change in your students as a result of having volunteers in your classroom? YES NO
 Comment on kinds of changes: _____
10. What suggestions do you have for the program? _____

11. Other comments: _____
12. What other kinds of activities would you like volunteers to be trained to do?

SOURCE: Schoeny, D. *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1995.

IX-11. Training Volunteers To Work in the Classroom

Volunteers who are going to be involved with children in the classroom need instruction before they begin. Teachers and volunteer coordinators will want to ensure that either group or one-on-one training is given. Possible topics include:

- How to begin a lesson.
- Expectations for the children.
- Learning styles of various children.
- Instructional goals.
- Proper procedures for handling discipline problems.
- Ideas for expanding on a lesson once the initial concept is taught.
- Time limits.
- Lesson closure.
- Communication about children's progress.

SOURCE: New Hampshire Partners in Education. *Partnership News*, 22(1), Fall 1993.

IX-12. Retention of Volunteers

- Volunteers need a feeling of belonging to the educational team. Nurture this feeling.
- Monitor volunteer-teacher placements. Be sensitive to problems and encourage flexibility when change is needed.
- Provide ongoing inservice training.
- Train teachers to work with volunteers. Many problems can be avoided if volunteers and teachers have compatible expectations.
- Provide feedback about volunteers' performance and suggestions for improvement in teaching, discipline, and human relations techniques. Volunteers need to know that teachers care.
- Use suggestions from evaluations whenever possible.

SOURCE: Adapted from handouts provided by M. Averett, Volunteer Coordinator, Lynchburg, Virginia, Public Schools, 1990.

Suggested Group Activity

- A) Imagine that you would like to have volunteers in your classroom, but your school does not have a school volunteer program. How would you go about developing a program for your classroom? What actions would you take to get school approval? How would you recruit volunteers appropriate for the tasks you have in mind and train them?
- B) Imagine that your school district has had a strong school volunteer program at the elementary level for a number of years. Assume that the new superintendent has appointed you to a task force to extend the program to the middle and secondary level. What are your recommendations?

X. CLOSING THOUGHTS

The inescapable conclusion from a great deal of evidence is that when it comes to making sure that students get a good education, schools simply can't do it alone. Education, at its best, is a team effort involving schools, communities, students, and families. Another inescapable conclusion is that teachers play a significant role in creating and sustaining the team effort.

The preceding units have presented the rationale for family and community involvement; implementation models; and strategies and techniques for creating and sustaining a program. This final section offers additional food for thought about one's own attitudes and actions on the subject of parent and community involvement.

X-1. Final Exam on Parent and Community Involvement

The following exam will assess your knowledge in the area of teacher-parent partnerships. Read each item carefully before selecting the best answer. Choose only one answer.

1. What is a teacher-parent partnership?
 - a. Teacher and parent as associates.
 - b. Teacher and parent as colleagues.
 - c. Teacher and parent as teammates.
 - d. All of the above.
2. How important is a teacher-parent partnership?
 - a. Extremely important.
 - b. Very, very, very important.
 - c. Tremendously important.
 - d. All of the above.
3. What are some ways to get to know your students' parents?
 - a. Introduce yourself at the beginning of the year by sending each family a card thanking them for the privilege of having their child in your classroom; following up with a weeknight telephone call.
 - b. Let the parents know if you are both a parent and teacher; they will appreciate your dual role and coinciding perspectives.
 - c. In order to establish rapport with the parents and make the first open-house experience very relaxing for everyone, encourage the parents to get together with you as a group or team prior to the formal event.
 - d. All of the above.

4. What are some ways to break down barriers to teacher-parent partnerships?
 - a. If one of your students mentions an important event taking place on the weekend (Bill's soccer championship, Mom's final exams), express interest and share in the excitement by telephoning the family for the outcome.
 - b. Make a telephone call suggesting a meeting on neutral grounds. "Hello, Mrs. Jones! How are you? I am considering doing some paperwork in the playground area after school and wondered if that might be a good time for us to discuss Cindy's progress?"
 - c. Use self-disclosure techniques during conversations: "I really admire your diligence in helping Larry with his homework. I must tell you that he was very excited to hear you were able to come today."
 - d. All of the above.
5. How can you provide parents with guidelines for getting the most out of their meetings with you?
 - a. Compile a list of topics and send it to parents prior to the first meeting. Include such areas as work/study habits; home and school responsibilities; field trips; major projects; behavioral issues; and general comments, questions and concerns. Note topics you will cover.
 - b. Send an invitation that has been designed by the children.
 - c. Call before the meeting. Set the tone by being upbeat, cheerful, and unpretentious. Try to learn the parent's concerns.
 - d. All of the above.
6. How can parents alert teachers to problems?
 - a. How about "An apple today means parents have something to say." If a child brings an apple (real, plastic, cardboard, etc.) on any given day, it would give notice that Mom and Dad need a call.
 - b. Inform parents at the beginning of the year that a simple signature on the homework sent home is sufficient (Mrs. Thompson). However, a formal signature (Mrs. Dolores J. Thompson) notifies the teacher to call the parent.
 - c. Provide parents with an all-purpose form they can use to notify you of problems and successes.
 - d. All of the above.
7. How can you assure an effective teacher-parent conference?
 - a. Greeting parents at the classroom door gives them a welcome feeling. Seating them next to you at the table, rather than across from you, puts them on an even level.
 - b. The day before the conference, have students bring in a complete set of their own clothes. Have them stuff the clothes with paper and make a head out of a stuffed paper bag with a self-portrait face on the front. Have the students place their "dummies" at their desks. A classroom full of surrogate students introduces a bit of humor into what is sometimes a tense situation.

- c. During the conference, be friendly, specific, positive, direct, confident, knowledgeable, professional, human, attentive, patient, realistic, organized, thorough, enthusiastic, and ambitious.
 - d. All of the above.
8. How can you give bad news in a helpful way?
- a. Boost the negatives with positives. "Suzie is a serious child and tries hard to succeed. She has the ability to do excellent work but is held back by tenseness." "Bill is a friendly child. However, he needs to develop more confidence in himself."
 - b. Avoid jargon. Be natural. Choose your words carefully.
 - c. After discussing problems or potential problems with the parents, suggest possible solutions to help form the foundation of a program you and the parent can work on as a team. Include Mom and Dad in deciding whether contingency contracts, reinforcers (tangible and edible), star charts, bonus points, special days, extracurricular activities, hugs, praise, or teacher-helper status would be most effective.
 - d. All of the above.

If you chose "D" for all of your answers, give yourself an A+.

SOURCE: Meyers, E., ed. *Teacher/Parent Partnership Handbook*. New York, NY: Impact II, 1989.

X-2. A Fable about Practically Nothing

Once upon a time, a task force was asked to design a school's parent and community involvement initiative. There were only four members. It was a task force not unlike those of many civic clubs, service clubs, church councils, even professional and technical societies.

The four members were named *Somebody*, *Everybody*, *Anybody*, and *Nobody*. All four declared that they supported the aims and objectives of parent and community involvement efforts.

But *Everybody* was either a golfer, bowler, gardener, or fisherman and used her spare time and talents that way, or stayed at home with friends.

Anybody wanted to go to the meetings of the task force but didn't because he was afraid that *Somebody* might give him a job to do, and he just wanted to belong, not work.

Nobody went to the task force meeting.

Of the four, *Nobody* was the best. For instance, when the task force needed a chair for an important committee, *Everybody* thought that *Anybody* should be willing to take on an important job like that, and *Somebody* observed that *Everybody* ought to.

Guess who finally got the job? That's right—*Nobody*.

And when the four learned that there was a new resident in the community who was an expert in community involvement, *Everybody* thought that *Somebody* ought to invite her to join the task force. *Anybody* could have extended the invitation, but didn't.

And can you guess who finally did get around to asking her? That's right—*Nobody*.

And do you know what finally happened to that task force. With *Nobody* doing the jobs that had to be done, the task force amounted to Practically Nothing, which is the real name of a great many task forces, despite their fancy assignments and high ideals.

Now the moral of the story is this: When you join a task force, you must be willing to work at accomplishing its aims and objectives. If you do not, others will call you *Nobody*, regardless of your real name, and your task force will amount to Practically Nothing.

SOURCE: Decker, L. E. Class handout. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1993. (Original source unknown.)

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PARTNERSHIP FOR LEARNING

Family Involvement Partnership for Learning, a nationwide initiative of the U. S. Department of Education, invites schools and business, community, and religious organizations to get involved in children's learning through family, school, and community partnerships. This initiative has produced and disseminated a variety of materials that focus on one National Education Goal: "Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children."

- *Strong, Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning* (1994) provides an excellent summary of the need for parent and community involvement as well as tips for schools, families, community organizations, and state and federal agencies.
- *America Goes Back to School: A Place for Families and the Community* (1995) is an activity guide with excellent ideas, plus a listing of information sources and references.
- *Community Update*, a monthly newsletter, provides announcements and references that are valuable sources for enhancing the family and community connections with schools.

For a complete listing of available publications, call the U.S. Department of Education, 1-800-USA-LEARN, or write Family Involvement Partnership for Learning, 600 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

NATIONAL COALITION FOR PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION (NCPIE)

The following members of NCPIE have reference materials to further assist with the promotion and development of parent and community involvement in education.

AARP

Grandparent Information Center
601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049
202-434-2288
Fax 202-434-6474

Academy for Educational Development
1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20009
202-884-8102
Fax 202-884-8400

Access ERIC

1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3172
800-LET-ERIC
301-251-5467
Fax 301-251-5767

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

One Dupont Circle, Suite 610
Washington, DC 20036-2412
202-293-2450

American Association of School Administrators

1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209
703-875-0754
Fax 703-528-2146

American Federation of Teachers/AFL-CIO

555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-393-8642
Fax 202-879-4537

ASPIRA Association, Inc.

1112 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-835-3600
Fax 202-223-1253

Association for Supervision and
Curriculum Development
1250 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1402
703-549-9110 x502
Fax 703-549-3891

Betty Phillips Center for Parenthood Education Box 81

Peabody College of Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203
615-322-8080
Fax 615-322-8999

Buddy System Project

17 West Market Street, Suite 960
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-464-2074
Fax 317-464-2080

CeDAR

2000 L Street, NW, #601
Washington, DC 20036
202-223-1593
Fax 202-785-3849

Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning

3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-516-8807
Fax 410-516-8890

Center for Revitalization of Urban Education National Education Association

1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-822-7091
Fax 202-822-7997

Center for Law and Education/NCCE
1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20009
202-882-1582
Fax 202-462-7687

Center for the Study of Parent Involvement
370 Camino Pablo
Orinda, CA 94563
510-254-0110
Fax 510-254-4870

Center for the Improvement of Child Caring
11331 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 103
Studio City, CA 91604-3147
818-980-0903
Fax 818-753-1054

Cities in Schools, Inc.
9045 Ewing
Evanston, IL 60203
708-674-8817
708-674-8276
Fax 708-674-2502

Council for Exceptional Children
1922 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
703-264-9406
Fax 703-620-4334

Council of the Great City Schools
1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 702
Washington, DC 20004
202-393-2427 x210
Fax 202-393-2400

Education Publishing Group
Statler Building, Suite 1215
20 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
617-542-6500, x128
800-927-6006
Fax 617-542-6564

ERIC/CUE
Box 40
Teachers College
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027
212-678-3433
Fax 212-678-4048

Families and Work Institute
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
212-465-2044
Fax 212-465-8637

Family Service America
1319 F Street, NW, Suite 204
Washington, DC 20004
202-347-1124
Fax 202-393-4517

Family Impact Seminars
1100 17th Street, NW, Suite 901
Washington, DC 20036
202-467-5114
Fax 202-223-2329

Family Resource Coalition
200 S. Michigan Ave., #1520
Chicago, IL 60604-2404
312-341-0900 x110
Fax 312-341-9361

Hispanic Policy Development Project
1001 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-822-8414
Fax 202-822-9120

Home and School Institute
MegaSkills Education Center
1500 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036-5649
202-466-3633
Fax 202-833-1400

Institute for Educational Leadership
1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, #310
Washington, DC 20036
202-822-8405
Fax 202-872-4050

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Ave., 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02215
617-353-3309
Fax 617-353-8444

International Reading Association
1040 Delf Drive
McLean, VA 22101
703-846-8608
Fax 703-207-0257

National Association for the Education of
Young Children
1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-1426
202-232-8777
800-424-2460
Fax 202-328-1846

National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-684-3345
Fax 703-548-6021

National Association for Partners in Education
209 Madison Street, Suite 401
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-836-4880
Fax 703-836-6941

National Association of School Psychologists
Urban School Psychology Programs
Howard University
School of Education
2400 6th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20059
202-806-5196
202-806-7350
Fax 202-806-7018

National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22090
703-860-0200, x273
Fax 703-476-5432

National Association of State Boards of Education
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-684-4000
Fax 703-836-2313

National Association of State Directors of
Vocational and Technical Education
444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 830
Washington, DC 20001-1512
202-737-0303
Fax 202-737-1106

National Black Child Development Institute
1023 15th Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
202-562-0763
Fax 202-234-1738

National Center for Family Literacy
325 West Main Street, Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
502-584-1133
Fax 502-584-0172

National Coalition of Title I/Chapter I Parents
National Parent Center
9th & D Streets, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-547-9286
Fax 202-544-2813

National Community Education Association
3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91A
Fairfax, VA 22030-2401
703-359-8973
Fax 703-359-0972

National Council of La Raza
810 First Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4205
202-289-1380
Fax 202-289-8173

National Dropout Prevention Center
Clemson University
Clemson, SC 29634-5111
803-656-2599
Fax 803-656-0136

National Head Start Association
201 N. Union Street, Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-739-0875
Fax 703-548-8305

National Information Center for Children &
Youth with Disabilities
1875 Connecticut Ave, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20009-1202
202-884-8200
Fax 202-884-8441

National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20202-7560
202-632-1522
Fax 202-632-1512

National Middle School Association
2600 Corporate Exchange Drive, Suite 370
Columbus, OH 43229-6292
614-895-4730
Fax 614-895-4750

National PTA
8616 Etta Drive
Springfield, VA 22152-2705
703-644-7333
Fax 703-644-4035

National Urban League
500 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10021-8379
212-310-9000
Fax 212-310-9219

Parents, Inc.
270 Commerce Drive
Ft. Washington, PA 19034
215-628-2402
Fax 215-628-9423

Parent Institute
P.O. Box 7474
Fairfax Station, VA 22039
703-323-9170
Fax 703-323-9173

Parents as Teachers National Center
9374 Olive Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63132
314-432-4330
Fax 314-432-8963

Project Parents, Inc
24 Appleton Street
Boston, MA 02116
617-451-0360

Quality Education for Minorities Network
1818 N Street, NW, Suite 350
Washington, DC 20036
202-659-1818, x24
Fax 202-659-5408

Resource Center on Educational Equity
Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Ave, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431
202-336-7033
Fax 202-408-8072

RMC Research
1815 N. Ft. Myer Drive, Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22209
703-558-4800
Fax 703-558-4823

School Improvement Council Assistance Project
College of Education
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
803-777-7658
Fax 803-777-0023

Webster's International, Inc.
5729 Cloverland Place
Brentwood, TN 37027
800-727-6833
Fax 615-373-1030

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